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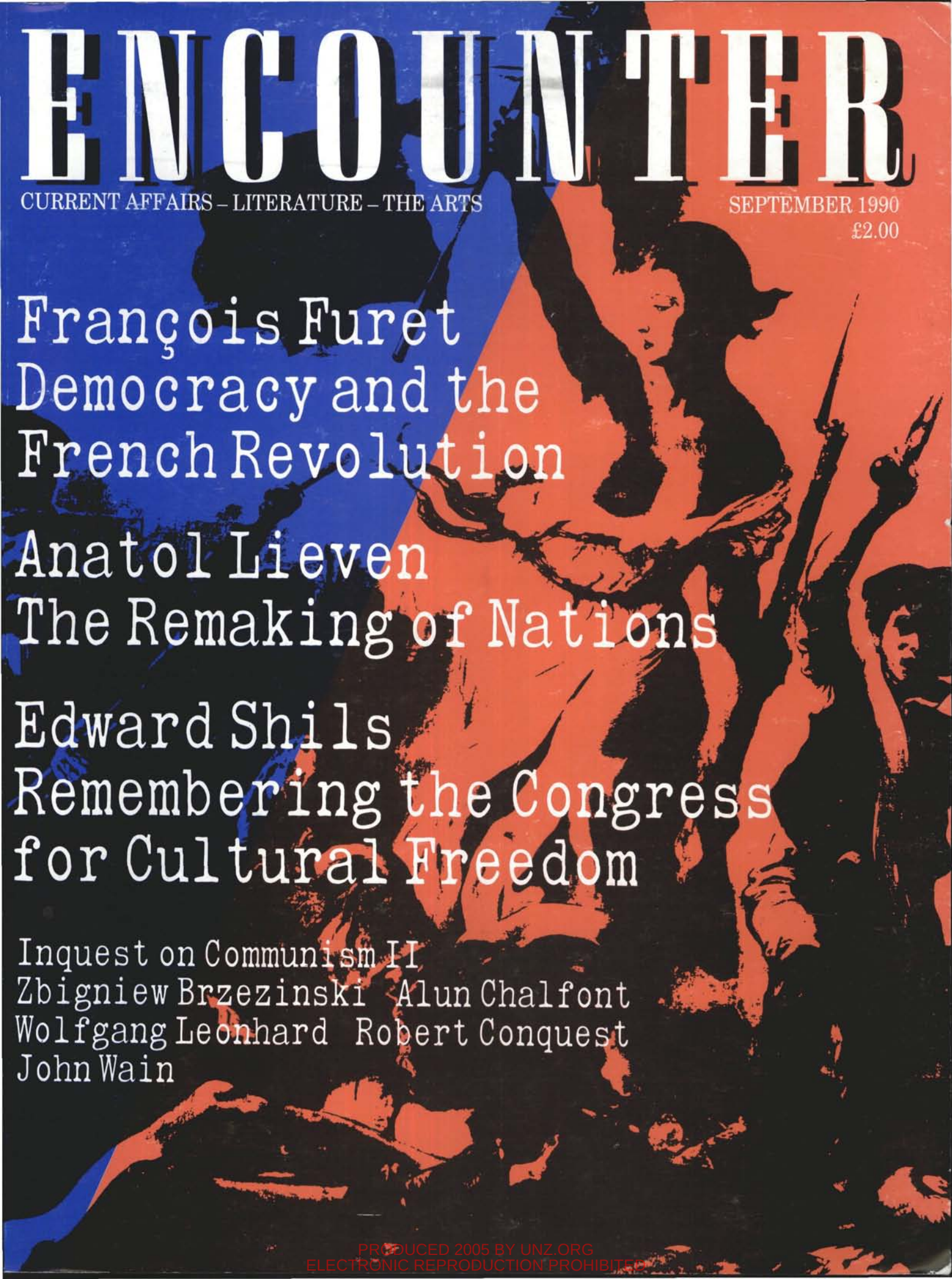

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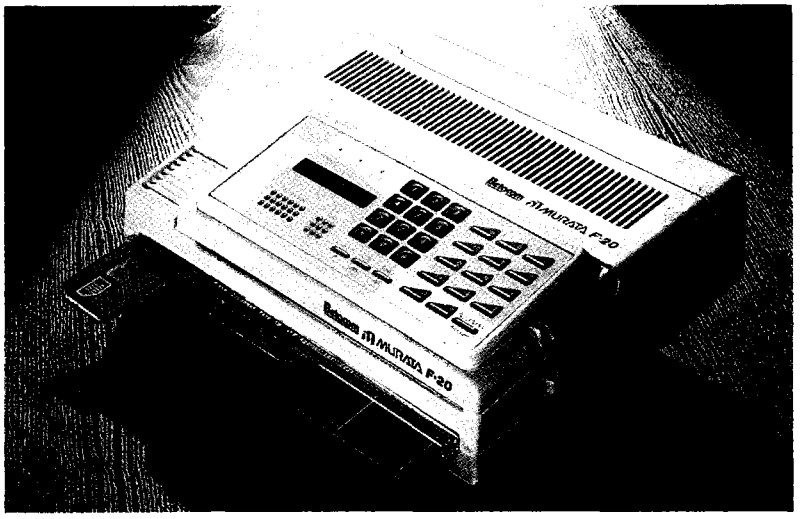

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François Furet

From 1789 to 1917 & 1989

Looking back at Revolutionary Traditions

IT IS A KIND OF irony of history that I should write about the French Revolution in the very country where it has had the least impact—I mean England, of course. Perhaps it would thus be appropriate to begin by discussing the objectives of the French Revolution of 1789 and the critique of those objectives by the most famous British adversary of 1789, Edmund Burke.

What lent the French Revolution its principal character was its wish to be universal. Independent from the particular conditions of its birth and even from the country in which it broke out, its chosen mission was not to alter existing institutions in keeping with the circumstances of national history or the state of public opinion, but to remake the social contract from top to bottom and to reconstruct society according to the principles of reasoned will. An inextricably political and philosophical event, its particularity came from this complex combination by virtue of which 1789 would be accompanied by a laicised religious annunciation, substituting the promise of the Rights of Man for the promise of God.

As would be the case in the birth of a religion, 1789 thus defined a "Before" and an "After". This is a rather enigmatic characteristic, if you consider that I speak here not of the messianic appearance of a saviour, but of an event in time, an event which, none the less, was thought to have disrupted the continuous flow of time. The French themselves have come to take that disruption for granted, and have long ceased to see it as at all strange. For 200 years 1789 has represented the origin of their division into Right and Left—into those who liked the *ancien régime*, and so detested the Revolution and vice versa. But just as the men of 1789 would have wished, that political schizophrenia has spread beyond the history of France. Since their time, it has become the revolutionary political universe, the political patrimony of Europe and even, in our century, of the whole world.

But Burke rejected the late 18th-century French enterprise in its entirety, and after the summer of 1789 he had seen enough to condemn its means and ends.

It is an understatement to say that he rejected the idea of historical discontinuity, for he could hardly conceive of such a thing. The idea of "a people without a past" was both an absurdity and a hopeless endeavour, for it posited a human collectivity deprived of its constituting element: those centuries of accumulation during which successive generations acquired their rules of civility, their customs and mores, their mode of being together, their Constitution. How is it, then, that the French of 1789 so fervently cherished the crazy idea of the *tabula rasa*? Burke described them with more indignation than penetration—although that indignation led him to identify their new principle of social organisation: the Rights of Man, those rights which are imprescriptible because they are "natural", which belong to each and every man, and which are the only possible foundation for a society composed of free and equal individuals.

Burke understood that this idea contained the constitutive abstraction of modern democracy and the universality of man—the equality of each to each. And to oppose it he brought forward real society, prejudices, passions and interests, thus setting the tone for what would become, since and after him, the central theme of conservative thought and more generally of the critique of democracy, whether originating with the Right or the Left: the differences between concrete individuals as opposed to the pretension to found a society upon their abstract identity. How can a society exist upon an illusion?

In the same way, the natural rights of individuals preclude the conceptualisation let alone the constitution of power. For what can bring unity to a society that defines itself as being composed of what belongs exclusively to each individual? How can men make the *polis* out of "private individuals"? Burke inherited the central question of the 18th century which he treated in the light of 1789. He was thus the first observer of the French events to understand to what extent the problem of political representation is at the heart

FRANÇOIS FURET *is one of the leading French historians, author of "In the Workshop of History" (1985), and with M. Ozouf co-edited "The Critical Dictionary of the French Revolution" (1989). His article is based on a talk he gave at a Ditchley Conference in Oxford, which was subsequently published in French in "Commentaire". Professor Furet is Director of the Institut Raymond Aron, at L'École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris.*

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of the French Revolution because the Revolution chose the radical individualism of rights as its ensign.

1789 completely separated the political from the social, the state from civil society: Marx would say this after Burke. But for the Whig parliamentarian, once the image of individuals, both private and equal, had been chosen as the point of departure, there was no longer any space left for the political body except in the abstract exaltation of the state community. This was something both illusory and dangerous. Illusory because political society has nothing to do with real society; and dangerous because the emancipation of individuals from social subordination does not bring about a diminution of the central authority's power over them, but rather a shift and increase in that power which would take the form of the state as the incarnation of the sovereignty of the people. It was his anticipation/prediction of a democratic despotism that lent Burke's analysis its enormous influence. Two years later, that despotism would be realised in the Terror.

In its course, the French Revolution really did manifest the contradiction between its philosophical message and the nature of the régimes it produced. After trying to conserve the *ancien régime* Monarch within a completely Republican system, the revolutionaries founded a dictatorial Republic based on the fear of the guillotine and finally ended up with an administrative and military dictatorship infinitely more despotic than any monarchy had ever been. Thus, in the language of Burke, "pure democracy" turned out to be incompatible with respect for the rights of French citizens; or, to put it into the words of Tocqueville one century later, equality had destroyed liberty.

VIEWED FROM the beginning of the 19th century, the heritage of the French Revolution seemed particularly unruly. Not only did the French events lack the "happy end" of the English 1688, but they furthermore set off a series of contradictions and political conflicts which would become inseparable from modern politics. On the one hand, there was the founding of modern society erected upon the ruins of the aristocratic world—a foundation that came about through the destruction of the traditional ties of dependency between men. Henceforth the building-blocks of society would be free and equal individuals, with each person possessed of imprescriptible rights guaranteed by their voluntary association. But, on the other hand, the political forms of that association, based on a foundation that was completely new in the history of the world, would turn out to be terribly fragile. The autonomy of individuals and the equality inseparable from it gave rise both to a formidable political instability and to régimes which would in fact be incompatible with the liberty they had proclaimed to be their very principle.

This is more easily understood if we position ourselves in the very first years of the 19th century, at the moment when the French, in their search for a resolution of the national political dilemma, had turned to a saviour born of circumstances and his own genius. The Bonapartist dictatorship drew its temporary power from the fact that public opinion—once having restored its own freedom with 9 Thermidor and the fall of Robespierre—was unable to decide upon the nature and means of ending the Revolution. Those who wished for that end—like Benjamin Constant or Mme de Staël—could not bring themselves to forget that the arrival of the Republic in France was inseparable from the Terror and lawlessness. They were incapable of defeating, to their Right, those nostalgic for the monarchy, and to their Left, those nostalgic for Jacobinism. The former, in order to guarantee law and order, would have liked to have had a new King but the only candidates available to them were the brothers of the beheaded monarch; and they were irrevocably bound by their misfortune to the Counter-Revolution. The latter, who wished to continue Robespierre's heritage, invented, with the help of Babeuf, a tactic of egalitarian overbidding in the form of a communism of agrarian redistribution. They were the first to initiate the socialist or communist idea viewed not as a creation of the working classes but as a legacy of the French Revolution. The Revolution thus continued to escape from those who wished to end it, for they continually bumped up against either those who wished altogether to erase the Revolution or those who wished to start it up all over again.

NONE THE LESS, BONAPARTE in his own way closed the theatre of the Revolution by creating the modern state. But although he was the sole master of the rational administrative machine which the Kings of France had never managed to complete, he personally remained its only vulnerable element. The old monarchy was weak but hereditary. The new one was strong, but a function of a single life-span. What was incontestable about it aggravated what was ephemeral about it. Like an evil spirit, the Revolution continued to survive in the random character of the reigning family.

The principal if not the only basis of Napoleon's power remained his victories and conquests, as though the unprecedented sovereign was obliged unceasingly to repay the price of his accession to power. Thus, instead of snuffing out the spirit of the Revolution, he prolonged, extended, and transformed it. He enriched the already prodigious repertory of that enormous event by adding Democracy of the Plebiscite as well as the memory of an extraordinary national adventure which, though superfluous, was unforgettable. Through him, the principles of the French Revolution would, in the 19th century, find their most powerful lever: the National Question. Thanks to him, many stateless European peoples would in the 19th century turn to France in quest of the principles for a renaissance or simply a collective existence. Thus the universality of the ideas of 1789 would receive a kind of confirmation in the unexpected form of national identities.

I do not intend now to provide the reader with a narrative—even a brief one—of what has occurred during the 200 years since the French Revolution in order to try to establish whether or not the course of history has turned out to match Burke's pessimistic predictions about French-style revolutionary democracy—or, on the contrary, the optimistic predictions put forth by Tom Paine about the Rights of Man. For

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I would rather take the standpoint of this late 20th century, and share with you some reflections on the state of the Western democratic world in relation to the tradition whose bicentennial we recently celebrated.

We are the children of two great historical catastrophes, Fascism and Communism, both of which, in their own way, can be traced back to the same origin. As we know, those two ideologies have had an enormous impact on European democratic public opinion, for reasons easily understood. They have claimed to follow in the line of the legacy of 1789 and the Rights of Man, of which they have offered comparable if not identical critiques. They have brought into question the universalistic abstraction of the French Revolution and have denounced the ideas of 1789 as the founding lie of modern democracy. It is true that beyond this point the two critiques radically part company. Fascism goes on to fight the universality of man in order to destroy it in the name of the Nation and of Race. Communism combats the same idea as a bourgeois illusion, but in order to realise it in the name of the Proletariat.

THE FASCIST CRITIQUE of democracy died first because it was vanquished by military force. Its defeat in 1945 made clear to the horrified eyes of the world the extent to which the Nazi dictatorship had plunged one of the most civilised countries of the European world into political and moral disaster. It probably did much to put an end to the mounting nationalist contest in Europe that characterised the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Since 1945, the German tragedy has ended up teaching Europeans the lesson that the passion for the National State—that product of the history both of monarchy and of democracy—is the most explosive force in modern times. The price of that lesson was incredibly heavy and, moreover, inseparable from the decline of our nations. It has, however, incontestably marked a decisive turning-point in the history of Western Europe. We have all learned how to handle more prudently the store of emotions that constitute membership in a nation. Only posterity will tell us what proportions of reflection and circumstance make up the wisdom we have acquired.

Communism survived the defeat of Nazism and even received from that defeat a great increase in power because the Soviet Union ended up in the winner's camp. But the tyranny practised by the post-revolutionary Bolshevik state in the name of "the emancipation of the proletariat" soon revealed its true totalitarian nature. This occurred just after Stalin's death when in 1956 Khrushchev denounced the crimes of his predecessor and what he termed "the cult of personality". Today we are experiencing the beginning of an irreversible process—the end of an idea that was one of the pillars (perhaps the principal one) of the European Left during the last 100 or 150 years.

As soon as Eastern Europe began calling for the Rights of Man, free elections, and what the Marxists had called "formal democracy", we became witnesses to an extraordinary reworking of the Communist heritage, particularly as it pertains to the relationship of the French to the Russian Revolution. In October 1917, the Bolsheviks hoped and believed they had gone beyond the abstract universalism of 1789 with the "real emancipation" of the working class. In the 20th-century Marxist vulgate, which extended its ideas well beyond the ranks of Communists, the French Revolution, universal in its ideas, was a "bourgeois fact", the Rights of Man were but an affirmation of "formal" principles, and even the energy spent in 1793 to encourage equality led only to "the reign of interests" in the Thermidorian period. 1789 was indeed a Revolution, but a "bourgeois revolution" and thus untrue to its principles, having substituted one form of exploitation for another. 1917 was the *real* revolution, charged with the task of realising the promises of the preceding one.

It is this very vision of the revolution that is toppling before our eyes today. Not only has the notion of the October Revolution as an emancipation foundered but the Communist world is returning to its source, which is more alive than ever: the Revolution it believed it had out-distanced and thus obliterated. The Bolsheviks thought that with 1917 they had buried 1789. Here, at the end of our century, we see that the opposite is happening. It is 1917 that is being buried in the name of 1789. This extraordinary reversal, unpredictable and unforeseen, imbues the famous principles of 1789 with a certain freshness and with renewed universality. As we begin to close the long and tragic digression that was the Communist illusion, we find ourselves more than ever confronted by the great dilemmas of democracy as they appeared at the end of the 18th century, expressed by ideas and by the course of the French Revolution.

Thus the entire European world is in the process of rediscovering its democratic values and principles, from such pre-democratic nations as Spain and Portugal to those nations thought to be post-democratic, such as the Communist dictatorships. The former, moreover, saved from having engaged in a disastrous falsehood, will have a much easier time than the latter in reintegrating their histories, economies, and even their modes of thinking into the mainstream of European democracy. It remains that the universal character of the principles of 1789 seems truer than ever before and holds more power over the imagination of those peoples of whom neither Burke nor Marx could conceive. We are thus also returned, with 200 years more experience, to the great questions posed by French-style democracy.

THOSE 200 YEARS that have elapsed, and particularly the 20th century, have given rise to a sort of critical filtering of the heritage of 1789.

First of all, this is because the more time passes, the further we are from the original event; and second, because the great catastrophes of the 20th century to which I have just referred have furthered (in Western Europe at least) the spirit of moderation and prudence. The most spectacular illustration of this evolution is the way in which post-Franco Spain has developed into a democracy. But to explore this idea further I would prefer to take the example of my own country, because France—the cradle of the 1789 Revolution—seems to me to be the prime example of a country that

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has finally learned—if tardily—to master its revolutionary tradition.

Heaven knows that France had a great deal of difficulty and took a long time to dominate that heritage and to anchor it in institutions both stable and free. A first "end" to the Revolution may be ascribed to the moment when Napoleon established his dictatorship and founded the modern centralised state with which we still live today. But if that "end" to the Revolution did indeed bequeath a state to contemporary France, it also consecrated the divorce between democracy and political liberty as well as the unrealistic policy of the French domination of Europe. The French Revolution resumed its course again in 1815, and 19th-century France had the strange character, perhaps unique in history, of being a people repeating for a second time the repertory of the late 18th century—the return of the legitimate monarchy, soon to be overthrown again, followed by a new 1789-like attempt to establish a constitutional monarchy. Then in 1848 came a new revolutionary Republic, and even a second Bonaparte when the first had seemed so exceptional both for his genius and for the circumstances that brought him to power. Finally, a new neo-Jacobin revolution and a last attempt to restore the Bourbons preceded the formation of the Third Republic, the first durable synthesis of the revolutionary democratic tradition.

IF WE LOOK AT our late 20th-century French Republic, the Fifth Republic, we can see to what extent French democratic institutions—the most consensual we have ever had since 1789—have, on the contrary, integrated elements that come from *outside* the revolutionary tradition. The France of today is no longer that republic where the singular and indivisible sovereignty of the public was exclusively in the hands of a Parliament or even of a single Assembly. Now sovereignty is vested in an autonomous judicial power which issues indirectly from the people while being independent and sometimes even above them. The *Conseil constitutionnel* is responsible for overseeing and verifying the constitutionality of laws. Additionally, the sovereign people voted overwhelmingly in favour of an idea passionately rejected by the French revolutionaries: that of a head of state elected by universal suffrage, something the men of 1789 saw as an embodiment of "the ghost" of the monarchy. The men of 1989 no longer viewed this idea as incompatible with French Republicanism, for this is their way of adapting to France something common to almost all modern democracies. It constitutes a rediscovery of a strong executive power.

A sweeping glance at today's democracies would probably lead us to the conclusion that the ways in which they have resolved the famous 18th century problem of how to organise the sovereignty of men over themselves are more similar than ever.

For example, democracy founded not only upon the sovereignty of the people, but also upon the division of power is not only a well-known formula for government—well-known since the 18th century—but a feature of all states that have adopted free institutions. And regardless of whether they have Parliamentary or Presidential systems or, as in the French case, a combination of the two, almost all—with the exception of Italy—have strong executive power even when that power is not the direct result of universal suffrage but designated by Parliament. In fact, in democracies of the parliamentary sort, the Prime Minister's authority comes from the voters who elect the representatives (those representatives having been chosen according to the chief executive they support). In France's mixed régime, that unique combination of Presidential and Parliamentary régimes, the supreme head of the executive—the President—is elected separately from the representatives. Because of this—as is the case in the United States, the classic model of a presidential democracy—the power of the President may be limited by the choice of representatives (as is indeed the dominant trend in the United States).[1]

To the list of common or at least comparable elements of contemporary Western democracies, we must further add the increased role of the Judiciary in the supervision of the constitutionality of laws. After World War II, and as a reaction to totalitarianism, supervision of laws by the judicial courts was established in West Germany, Italy, Greece, Spain, Portugal and, in 1958, in France. Although this is an idea which can be found in the writings of the Abbé Sieyès at the beginning of the Thermidorian period, it is alien to the French revolutionary tradition, which is characterised by what is called "Parliamentary Absolutism". It has, nevertheless, become a common element of 20th-century constitutionalism on both sides of the Atlantic and finds an unprecedented theatre in Europe in the newly established European Convention on Human Rights, involving all the member nations of the European Community. Not only do all of its members have Constitutional Courts, but those courts are linked by a charter of the Rights of Man which has supreme precedence and by a European Court of those same rights which functions as a supranational court of appeal. The result is the first milestone of the outline of a European state.

AND SO, EVEN WHILE democracy has encountered great disasters in our century, we are currently witnessing the opening up of superior horizons—proof that the ideas of the French Revolution have, in the end, escaped from the malediction that the course of that Revolution seemed to foretell. The democratic revolutionary tradition has indeed fostered incredible catastrophes such as murderous Utopias and the cult of the Nation-State. But on the ruins of those tragedies, at the base of our Western European societies, survive more than ever the principles of 1789—mastered at last, and embodied in free institutions,

[1] Very recently in France, between 1986 and 1988, the French executive power has split itself in two, with the President and the Prime Minister coming from different majorities, thus constituting a new form of the separation of power which would have surprised Montesquieu. Nevertheless, in all these cases, new or old, it would seem that strong executive powers directly issuing from popular suffrage have become the rule in modern democracies, distancing them from the model of 1789.

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and thereby closer to the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The guardian angels of the Europe we are trying to construct are neither military glory, nor the grandeur of the state, nor the end of history—but more modest and modern spirits: the liberty and well-being of individuals.

At least this Europe, born of the ruins of its history and re-emerging in prosperity, conserves some of the more significant elements of its exceptional past: the experience of democracy; scientific and technical knowledge; prosperity; and all the pre-conditions for power except for a common will. Once more, it is doing something unprecedented with that heritage. Having once invented the Nation-State—that remarkable instrument of civilisation which almost proved fatal—Europe is now facing the challenge of inventing a new form of community composed of a collection of peoples who have for so long been in conflict. A shared economy will not be enough, and nor will a "*Europe des États*", nor, conversely, a "Nation of Europe" conceived along the lines of the nations which have populated its history.

In truth, Europe of the Twelve can deny neither its origins nor the tendency of its youthful history—that of "a great market"—because they have already provided unity in the at least passive assent of the peoples involved. Having issued from a victory of societies over nations, it would only give ammunition to its enemies were it to go against its natural leanings. But it remains critical that Europe come up with a different kind of popular will, more durable than a military threat which defines but a single circumstance. That will be as strong as the feeling of belonging to a nation, something the European institutions are too young to inspire. In short, Europe needs to be not only a strong and prosperous market, but an idea and an ambition. On that day, Western democracies will be truly united by a common political tradition.

On the Border

(Rzepin, Poland, August 1989)

A sunrise pale as concrete
and four women with buckets
still clearing up; yesterday
must have been some party,
empties spill over the bin.

I lean from the window, stare
at the platform, and still it refuses
to move. I sit back
and wait for the soft jolt
and clang of the engine coupling,

it must come soon. Carriage
by carriage the silence
adds on its weight.
Chalk on the goods trucks fades.
All afternoon, those lovers

patrolling like guardsmen embracing
have found the same corner
and keep turning back. The man
with the long-handled hammer
has forgotten which note.

Sometime soon, the sun
like an aspirin will drop into night.
Keep awake.
Perhaps it's the carriage beside us
but I think we have started to move.

Desmond Graham

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Ettie Aman

Abutor

MACHMUD gardened for my neighbour Sarah, whose mother had carried her across mountains to bring her to safety. That was during the time when you were lucky you didn't land in the gas chambers. Sarah grew up on Kibbutz Zora, married, and came to live in Abutor, a neighbourhood of Jerusalem, just after the Israeli War of Independence, when only the brave chose to live there. From her garden wall you had a beautiful view of the Old City of Jerusalem and the wall around it where Jordanian legionnaires sat with rifles cocked and sometimes took a playful shot at Jewish mothers taking a stroll with their infants in baby prams.

We were sitting on the porch of Sarah's house. It was an afternoon in summer, just before the twilight which is the most beautiful time of day the world over. We had too much sun that summer of 1987. There was so much sun that plants refused to go on making an effort to grow; just allowed themselves to be cremated. Other years the wild mustard seed would wilt in the heat, but that year they just turned into straw. If you walked softly and listened you could hear them creaking as though they were contemplating bursting into flame.

"Look!" Sarah put down the ceramic teapot to have a finger free to point with.

To see Machmud working in the garden, uprooting the weeds that had turned into straw, was better than watching a dance. The way he bent his back and knees and economically struck his blows at the earth in a rhythm as old as old. He and the pick and movement. Few understand the movement of the pick. A dance of nature with the spirit moving the body without separating from it, moving in a flow that is the loveliest of all movement.

She'd caught him in the act, Sarah said. He'd tried his luck at around 2.30, when the siesta claims the neighbourhood. There was not even a bird in sight, and only a muted rumbling came from the traffic as it made its curve at the railway station into Ḥevron Road.

"He was as dark as a Jew from Yemen and with a head as round as a coconut. And quiet. I watched him through the red velvet curtains and saw him pick and eat, pick and eat, pick and eat the purple figs. *My* purple figs." When she saw the Arab eating her figs, black fury rose in her. She'd show him. Softly now. Sometimes the door squeaked. It had been forced several times by adventurous delinquents and now did not quite fit the wall. Sometimes, also, it caught on a piece of dirt carried in from the garden. The door squeaked. She held her breath. He was still eating her figs. She manoeuvered the stone steps that led to the cracked pathway that led through the lawn down to the fig-tree. I knew that fig-tree! I had one like it in my garden. A splendid tree, my favourite—preferred even to the lemon tree that bloomed into blossoms lavish with their fragrance on a Jerusalem summer's night, preferred even to the almond that spread a web of white and pink on the surrounding air.

When she reached the tree, she just stood there, not saying a word. He finished what he was eating and turned to her. They stood quite silently looking at one another.

"Why are you stealing my figs?"

He said it was his tree. The tree belonged to the Arabs. The land belonged to the Arabs. Even the house . . . . "Mine!" he said.

"Where do you live?"

"In Arab Abutor."

"Come. Show me where you live."

They went up Rechov Aminadav to the Hill of the Evil Counsel; the Arab and Israeli army posts that had challenged each other across a few metres of hillside before the Six Day War had long since been converted into apartments. She was not a tall woman. They were about the same size. She tried to walk alongside him as they turned left towards Rechov Gichon which led to the Arab side of the neighbourhood, but she never caught up with him. He edged forward all the time so that she had to walk behind him. As they entered the courtyard of his house she asked him if he had a fig-tree.

"Better than yours."

"Show me."

She stretched out her hand and picked one of his figs. "Now that we're such good neighbours and you feel friendly enough to come and pick my figs, I'll come and pick yours whenever I feel friendly. You understand?" She popped the fig into her mouth.

That's how Sarah came to hire Machmud.

Afterwards, I would often pass him in the street off to garden somewhere, and look at him and think: "I don't have to look at you. You're a dirty, small, mean-looking Arab in filthy clothes. I don't have to feel guilty about you. I don't feel guilty. Go away!" But he

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would not go away. I met him every morning on my way to the bus-stop in Rechov Ḥevron. Sometimes, out of the corners of my eyes, I saw him lift his left hand to his forehead in greeting. I found I could not ignore him. After a while I found myself greeting him: "Shalom." When my eyes met his, finally, I saw he had the eyes of my father. The same colour, the colour of my father's boots, polished black, that he wore to synagogue. The same shape too: like the leaf of the olive-tree. He was even built like my father. Five foot, not more, and pared down to the bone—in my father's case, the result of starvation in Lithuania before World War I. Professionally, of course, they had little in common. My father had been a *shochet* and Machmud was a gardener.

I CAME TO hire him because of the heat. I was afraid that summer of 1987. That was the summer whole *dunams* of trees burnt down. All along the street neighbours deposited their weeds. They lay in great heaps at the side of the road. The sun came and burnt them till they turned to dust—sunflowers, nettles, geraniums and just plain weeds. It was in July or August when the kids have school holidays and go crazy from playing Monopoly. The street was some way from my house which is set well back from the garden wall. It was a stone wall, solid stone. I felt safe behind my stone wall. But I wondered about the weeds. Some weeds will grow anywhere—even solid rock. They insinuate their roots into the cracks and they too turn into straw in the summer. I was half-asleep when I heard the crackling and got a whiff of smoke. I was out of the bed and into my clothes and through the door down the steps and into the garden when I saw the flames shooting up. Orange-coloured flame against the blue summer's day. I could hardly move for trembling. But somehow I made it and dragged the hose to the wall. I caught the fire just in time. If the fire had caught the weeds on top of the stone wall and the flames had caught the branches of the pine trees . . . .

I came to ask Sarah, the linguist, for help.

"Sarah, invite Machmud for an interview. Tell him I don't understand a word of Arabic. And tell him that even when I nod my head he mustn't take me seriously. I'm just being polite."

Machmud with my father's eyes came in the morning to inspect my garden. We walked in silence, accompanied by the scent of the yellow broom vying with the fragrant honeysuckle and the white, star-shaped jasmine. A dog barked, a bird piped, a car hooted. It was as though the garden had been set to music. It was peaceful, our silence. No guilt. No guilt when there was no talk. And I could not talk because I did not know the words. The weeds—straw that summer, not weeds—grew in monstrous quantities under the apple tree, under the fig-tree, under the plum tree and choking the vine. The straw was the colour of summer. I could not pretend to dislike it. But I was afraid. Machmud's hands touched the fruit on the trees with understanding. He approved of fruit, I could see. As though he was stroking a woman or a cat. But the ivy on the wall did not please him. I thought: there's nothing as cool as ivy on a wall.

"*Vard*", he said. Most people like roses and he was no exception.

"Green", I said in Hebrew, "*Yarok*." You planted to eat, he meant. My Arab maid used to show the same disparagement of flowering plants. She once insinuated some beans between the narcissi so some of the earth, at least, should not be wasted. Machmud glared at the straw, muttering imprecations. We made the rounds of the fruit-trees and the plants in my garden. I missed the red poppies. There had been so many of them in the spring it looked as though someone had switched on the grass. My garden was one of the largest in Abutor and I was holding on to it by the skin of my teeth. We had become fashionable when the Jordanian legionnaires moved on.

EVERY WEEK a wealthy contractor paid me a visit. He started off his visit by shaking hands. If he had a temper, he had stowed it away in his subconscious. He was a tall man, painfully thin, Uriah Heepish. He peeked into my kitchen and I saw with his eyes how the tiles had come loose from behind the sink. No amount of magic cement had been able to keep the plastic tile in place. It was flapping loose at one corner. When I looked at it alone I could bear it but I was ashamed when I saw it with the eyes of other people.

"Wouldn't you like a nice new modern kitchen?"

"Oh yes, I would." I saw him watching me, trying to read my face, so I wiped it clean of thought. Oh, how I would! With a wall cupboard made of olive wood, and under the sink a turning hold-all for pots and pot lids and pans, and in the corner a special tall cupboard for brooms and cleaning material, and ledges for pot plants and a panel with hooks for the most delicate of cups. As we sat down in the living-room the carpet literally faded. The books that leaned higgledy-piggledy against each other for comfort on shelves that reached to the ceiling were encrusted in old, old dust. My eyes followed his like the string on a kite. What else would he discover? He was adding up the cost of the furniture and was not impressed. Contractors! When he said: "Blast!" they blasted. He said: "Bring bricks!" they brought. The earth gaped with their blasting. The foundations went up. The cement-mixing machine spewed concrete. The new buildings rose brick by brick towards the pine trees. I could measure the growth of the buildings by the way the trees dwindled. Every inch of house meant one inch less of tree. That grave-digger! He had buried my view.

"Your house is not worth much", he said.

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Not worth much! From my balcony you could still see the Mosque of Omar. In the mornings the woodpecker attacked the fig-tree. It was the only alarm clock I had. After the Six Day War my neighbour said to me: "We must hold on to our beautiful stone houses. We must preserve the special character of our neighbourhood." She was a small woman with a big bulldog called, inappropriately, Motek. Motek was no darling. He had a fancy for cats and smaller dogs. His mistress put up a notice on the gate: "DOG DANGEROUS TO CATS AND OTHER DOGS."

"We'll have to collect subscriptions for a dog school so that the dogs can learn to read your notice", I told her. But before we could build our school for dogs she'd sold her property to the contractor, who built fifteen apartments on the site of her house. Luckily they were so expensive you could only afford them with one foot in the grave. The new tenants were very quiet. There were no children.

"You'll have money and neighbours. You won't be lonely", he said to me. But when I told him I had no fondness for neighbours or money he went, without shaking hands, back to his apartment in one of the new blocks he had built where my neighbour's house used to stand.

MACHMUD was the one who discovered it. We had made the rounds of the fruit-trees and had reached the bottom of the garden. He pointed: I looked and saw a mountain of garden dirt. Then he pointed to the contractor's garden on the other side of the garden wall. It was not my idea of a garden: dahlias and roses, orderly, queuing up. No wonder his garden was immaculate. How dare he! Spill his rubbish on to my property. He obviously had no feelings. I'd show him!

I glanced quickly at my Arab gardener. As I thought: allies.

"Machmud! Help me!"

I pounced upon a wilted heap of sunflowers and geraniums and threw it over the garden wall into the contractor's immaculate garden. "I'll show him. I'll show him." I was jumping up and down.

"Help me, Machmud!"

Machmud did not budge. I could see he was displeased. Then he put out a hand like a traffic policeman. "STOP." I subsided. He pointed to his mouth, making talking movements with his lips. Then pointed to the house on the other side of the garden wall.

"*Bruch*."

Bruch I know. It means go. *Bruch* and *shukran* for thank you are about the extent of my Arabic. What did he mean? He bent, lifted an imaginary bundle from the ground and threw it across the wall. Then he jumped over the wall. Lifted an imaginary bundle and threw it to my side. He repeated this several times until I caught on. I saw what he meant. If you did not talk you would have to keep throwing their rubbish back. They threw. You threw. You threw. They threw. You threw. No end to it.

I sighed and went. I could not jump over the wall. It was too steep. To get to the contractor's garden I had to make a detour. Had to go through my gate, out into the street, turn into his gate and go up a little hill to his house.

The gate that opened on the contractor's property was a new one. The old wrought-iron gate was dead—murdered by the contractor. First he murdered the gate. Then he murdered the cypress tree that used to guard the gate. He sawed it in half. Half pretended it was still a tree and kept growing. The other half lay down on the hard grey earth of summer and gave up.

I hurried through the murdered gate, past the dying tree. I had to hop over whole cemeteries of bricks to get to the house of the contractor. Past the ghost of the lawn, the ghost of the fig-tree. Whom to talk to? There was no one in the garden. I went to the door of his house and rang the bell. There was no answer. The door remained locked. Not a sign of a living soul in the garden. Finally I went back to my house for pencil and paper and wrote a letter. I made a hole at the top of the paper and tied it with string to a rose-bush. "We had better be good neighbours", the note said, "or we'll be chucking dirt at each other for ever."

I haven't seen the contractor for a long time. He must be demolishing other houses. Nor have I seen any of his garden dirt in my garden. He deals with it on his side of the garden wall.

Machmud burnt every weed in my garden. He never seemed to eat. Just tea. Drank tea without milk but with sugar. It was a philosophy with him—not to eat while working. And that's probably why he was so thin, pared to the bone like my father.

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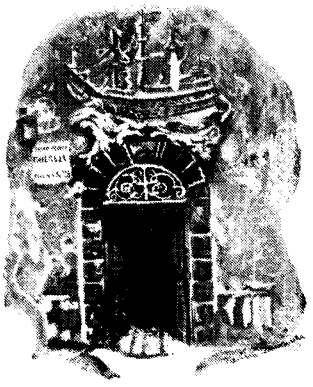
Anatol Lieven

Baltic Summer

On the Re-Making of Nations



IT IS 30 JUNE, in Vilnius. The Soviet government has just announced the ending of its embargo on oil shipments to Lithuania, the major part of its "blockade". Yesterday, the Lithuanian parliament voted to place a moratorium on its declaration of independence when negotiations with Moscow begin. With this, the first stage of the Baltic independence movement has come to an end. Or at least, it can be described as having done so, for the sake of historical tidiness and to give journalists the chance to write a few retrospectives. As far as the Soviet Union is concerned, dusk has not yet finally fallen on the Empire, the Owl of Minerva is still fast asleep amidst the bustle of events. But although it is early to start trying to impose an analytical structure on what is happening, in the Baltic certain patterns can be observed—although how they will turn out, God alone knows.

One of these patterns has consisted of restraint on both sides, founded in consciousness of their own impotence. The fact that both sides are so weak, and have discovered in the course of their struggle that they are even weaker than they had thought, has been one of the curious things about this whole business. It is a central reason why violence has been avoided, despite the threats and the rhetoric.

It was hardly in the interest of *Sajudis*, the Lithuanian national government, to push matters to conclusions with the Soviet Army. So "provocations" have been rigorously avoided, and the younger hotheads reined in. I began my last ENCOUNTER piece by saying that four days after the Lithuanian declaration of renewed independence, statues of Lenin and other Soviet heroes were still standing. They are there as I write, and it looks as if they will remain for some time to come.

It was not in Moscow's interest to provoke the West by a military crackdown—the Western reaction to the very limited military steps that were taken was quite worrying enough to a Kremlin desperate for Western aid. Moreover, as is becoming manifest, the Soviet Army has now become far weaker than could possibly have been imagined nine months ago. It lacks the means and the will even to defend its own interests in the Baltic, at least as far as conscription and the arrest of deserters are concerned. At the time, Soviet behaviour did not seem particularly restrained, and Soviet language was definitely menacing; but, looking back, one can see how much exaggeration there was in Western reporting of what was going on. This was caused partly by journalists whipping each other up into a frenzy in the parliamentary press room, and partly by genuine tension among the politicians—though not, generally, on the streets. The tension was reflected in some extremely misleading information issuing, on occasions, from the Baltic government press offices.

I am reminded of the night in late March when a large Soviet armoured column drove through central Vilnius, passing close to the parliament. The column's approach had been reported at midnight, when it was nearing Kaunas, three hours and 100 kilometres away. As it got closer, the strain grew, until the parliament, which continued its deliberations, passed an emergency decree providing for the establishment of a government-in-exile if it were overthrown by force.

Even at the time, the deliberate approach of the tanks seemed odd behaviour for troops involved in a military coup. After they had passed through on their way to their base in northern Vilnius, the Prime Minister, Mrs Prunskiene, said soothingly that I wasn't to take it seriously; she was going to bed. Deputies, too, shrugged off the matter with exaggerated nonchalance. An armoured column is an impressive sight, however; and at the time everyone got very excited, with deputies striking heroic poses and vowing to remain firm, even in Siberia. The government fired off tele-

ANATOL LIEVEN, *born in 1960 in London, was educated at City of London School, Jesus and Trinity Colleges, Cambridge, and Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi. From September 1988 to September 1989 he was correspondent for "The Times" in Pakistan and Afghanistan, and made journeys to cover the war on both the Mujahiddin and government sides. He was severely injured in a jeep accident on the Afghan Frontier, and after his recovery reported for "The Times" the revolutions in Czechoslovakia and Romania. Since January 1990 he has been correspondent for "The Times" and "The Economist" in the Baltic republics, from where his father's family emigrated after the Russian Revolution. His "Baltic Notebook" appeared in our May 1990 issue.*

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grams all over the world, condemning this "act of naked aggression", and I poured my reports into every available media outlet.

Next morning, exhausted but triumphant, I went out on to the streets to ask ordinary Lithuanians what they felt about the column's arrival. The response was a trifle deflating. Not one of the first five people I spoke to had even heard the news. Even two days later, many were not aware of the fact; and very few thought it important. "The troops here have always moved around from time to time", was a common response. A woman living near the military base at Severnaya Gorodok said that when she first arrived there she was sometimes disturbed by the noise of heavy vehicles rumbling in the night—"But you get used to it."

THE PHLEGM of ordinary Lithuanians was infuriating to Western journalists looking for dramatic quotes and pictures, but it has proved amply justified by the event. Even at the height of the military "occupations" of buildings in Vilnius, when *Sajudis* leaders in the parliament were vowing that total military crackdown was imminent, I could find few people on the streets who thought it likely. *Sajudis*'s intention, of course (when they were not simply suffering from over-excitement), was to alert Western opinion so as to make a crackdown less likely; but we journalists on the spot would have done better to take a cooler look at what they were saying. The reason for our partial failure lies partly, of course, in what constitutes a "story". The passion of Foreign Desks for tanks is an enduring one, and one night a few weeks after this incident I found myself running down the road in my pyjamas, in the rain, trying to count the tanks in another column which was passing my doorway.

The most visible aspect of military pressure on Lithuania was the placing of Army guards on Communist Party buildings in Vilnius. This was Moscow's way of intervening in a feud between the two parts of the old Soviet Lithuanian Communist Party. When this split occurred, in January, the independent Communists led by Algirdas Brazauskas, who formed the great majority of delegates at the Congress, took over all the central Party institutions and buildings, leaving the Soviet loyalist Party with a few local headquarters in Russian and Polish majority areas. The matter was supposed to be regulated by the Lithuanian courts, in which the Soviet Party had little confidence. However, before the legal process had even begun, the Lithuanian Party began to hand over some of these buildings to various academic bodies (or perhaps I should say "give back", since in some cases these buildings had been stolen from society in the first place).

In the long run, even the Soviet Party would have been forced to do this. For, as Communist rule recedes, it is leaving behind it a wrack of huge, whale-like constructions without any very obvious use. It would be delightful to be able to describe the handful of Party officials, policemen and soldiers as lingering on in a decaying Ozymandian magnificence; but one of the depressing things about the Soviet Union has been that even the seats of the rulers are generally drab and badly-constructed bureaucratic holes (although the Central Committee building in Vilnius is quite a distinguished piece of modern architecture, and might do as a cultural centre).

The placing of Soviet guards on these buildings was followed by the handing over of shares in them to the Soviet Party. The soldiers involved were generally referred to by the Lithuanian government as "paratroopers", but a majority of the soldiers used were in fact not picked troops at all, but ordinary Ministry of the Interior (*MVD*) conscripts dressed in police uniforms—bewildered spotty youths, referred to by an English woman colleague as "these ludicrous young men".

In a number of cases, the buildings after their "occupation" had more guards put on them by *Sajudis* volunteers, and the resulting situation was, to put it mildly, rather curious. At the main Vilnius Printing House—transferred to Communist Party ownership in the 1970s—Soviet troops confined themselves to the basement, while Lithuanian volunteers guarded the doors against any more troops arriving. Relations between the two groups were distant but not hostile, as far as I could see. In the words of one of the print workers: "We sometimes put food outside their door because they don't look as if they're getting much from the Army. At the time, they refuse to take it, but when we come back a bit later, it's all gone." But the Army seems to have realised that it was beginning to look foolish, and when some weeks later *Sajudis* attempted to place more guards on a smaller printing house which was already under *MVD* guard, the response was swift and brutal. The Lithuanians were ejected by paratroopers in riot gear.

BY THEN, however, the damage had been done. Lithuania had defied the Kremlim, and most of the measures taken by Moscow in response seemed petty and ineffective. This continued a process of undermining the prestige of Soviet authority which had begun when Mikhail Gorbachov made his personal appeal to Lithuanians on his visit to Vilnius in January, before the Communist Party split. It may be seen by historians as a key moment in the collapse of Gorbachov's personal authority—though the question of whether Boris Yeltsin's victory would have happened when it did even without Lithuania (if, that is to say, the Russian revolt had proceeded according to its own motor power) may provide the bone for an intellectual dog-fight or two, as will the question of what line Gorbachov would have taken towards "the nationalities" if Yeltsin hadn't won.

The impotence of Soviet power in Lithuania was rubbed home by the Printing House episode. After its "occupation", the leadership of the Soviet Party announced that henceforward, as CPSU property, it would print only their publications. If the workers refused, it was hinted, they would be sacked, and replaced with others brought in from elsewhere in the Soviet Union. As the Party's effective leader, Vladislav Shwed, said to me with a modified snarl, "In what country of the world do the workers have the right to decide what they are going to print?" A good Murdochian sentiment; but the workers, and their director, did refuse—and nothing happened. The printing works are still producing all their normal pro-Independence publications. In Latvia, however, where the printing workers are mainly Russians, the

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question of ownership of the plant in Riga could cause more serious trouble.

A similar case occurred with the replacement of the Lithuanian State Procurator (Chief Prosecutor, roughly on the French judicial model) by a Soviet stooge. This was an occasion even richer in irony than in drama, as sober Lithuanian legal officials briefly started to resemble rebellious students, howling down their would-be teachers.

The All-Union First Deputy Procurator General, Alexei Vassiliev, did a fairly good job of playing the reasonable Proconsul—Pontius Pilate with a briefcase—as he reminded his listeners that legally Lithuania was still part of the USSR, which therefore had the right to appoint the State Procurator. "The time will come when all these things will be negotiated", he told the Lithuanian officials, "but for the moment you as lawyers must see that the existing law has to be obeyed."

What Mr Vassiliev ran into, however—apart from Lithuanian patriotism—was a factor which helped to hasten the end of British rule in India and elsewhere. Once you as a colonial power have admitted that "Everything is negotiable", and that you are not going to prevent national movements from exercising power in the longer term, no local official who values his or her career is going to side with you during the "transition period". Once this factor begins to operate, the decay of imperial authority can be astonishingly swift. Even Russian officials who dislike Lithuanian independence but want to go on living in Lithuania are having to show their loyalty to the Lithuanian government.

IN OTHER WORDS, the Soviet Union can no longer find people to carry out its orders in the Baltic and elsewhere. This was brought home by the pathetic figure of the Soviet appointee Procurator, Colonel Petrauskas. Formerly head of the military Procuracy in the Riga garrison, he was plucked from middling bureaucratic obscurity to his brief ignoble moment in the limelight, presumably because he was the only legal official in the whole of the Soviet Union who had a Lithuanian name but could be relied on to do Moscow's bidding. He sat by Vassiliev's side at the meeting with the Lithuanian officials, a paunchy, sweating, deeply embarrassed figure in an ill-fitting *apparatchik*'s suit, stumbling through his rote of arguments.

The next day, I climbed in through a window—itself a sign that the "occupation" was not desperately serious—for a chat with some of the Lithuanian officials who had refused and to this day are still refusing to cooperate with Petrauskas and company. They gave me a hilarious account of the men whom Vassiliev was trying to use to set up an office for Petrauskas: retired Soviet Colonels who were given jobs as "Civil Defence Chiefs" for the Procuracy ("Once every six months, he'd come and ask us where our gas masks were, but of course none of us had any"), or as librarians ("He has a row of Brezhnev's books hidden at the back, which he thinks nobody knows about"). Even assuming that some of these remittance men are really *KGB*, it does not seem a very impressive staff. Colonel Petrauskas and these men are still there, maintaining the ghostly presence of Soviet legal authority, but the reality is held by the Lithuanian-appointed Procurator.

The only point at which the Soviet Procuracy might become a serious force is if the Polish and Russian areas of Lithuania go through with the threat of some of their leaders to set up new administrations outside Lithuanian authority, exercising control over their own police. As yet, however, there is little sign of this. Once again, Soviet authority was made to look thoroughly foolish.

THE SOVIET GUARDS are still here, but they are unobtrusive in their police uniforms, and don't get in the way of people working in the buildings. The act of stationing them, it seems to me, was not simply a way of bullying the Lithuanians. Even at the time, it also looked ahead to talks. It may now be seen, with hindsight, as an attempt to do what the Lithuanians had done already on the legal front with their declaration of independence and the laws which followed from it—for example, transferring factories from Soviet to Lithuanian ownership, and restricting the movements of the Soviet Army in Lithuania. The Lithuanian intention was not to seize actual power, but to lay down certain basic positions in advance of negotiations.

The Soviet occupations and the appointment of the Procurator symbolise what is likely to be Moscow's basic position in talks (assuming that the Soviet government is still in a position to lay down conditions, which in the longer run is not certain). For if Lithuania does opt out of the new Soviet confederation to become an independent state, the Soviet Union—or perhaps simply "Russia"—will retain a very large stake in the country.

Even if, as was the case with independent Lithuania between the two World Wars but is unlikely for the future, Soviet economic links with Lithuania were to become negligible compared to those of the West, this Soviet stake would still remain in the form of the 9% Russian minority, together with those Poles, Byelorussians and Jews who feel unable to trust the new Lithuanian state. Moscow's position seems likely to be that these should hold Soviet citizenship while enjoying full political rights in Lithuania; and that they should be represented politically by a Soviet Communist Party which will be free to operate in Lithuania while retaining links with Moscow.

The Lithuanian parliament had already made one move towards excluding this last possibility by formulating a law which restricts the rights of "foreign political parties" in Lithuania—but this has been shelved as part of the moves towards compromise with Moscow. It may not, in any case, be a serious prospect: the Soviet Communist Party is falling to pieces even as I write. For the rest, however, one could see some distant parallels between what it seems that Moscow will ask for Russians in the "lost" parts of the Empire, and the extraterritorial rights of Europeans in China after the "unequal treaties" of the 19th century.

The name of the body which has been coordinating the protests of Russian and Polish opponents of Lithuanian independence—the Committee for the Rights of Soviet Citizens in Lithuania—suggests that its founders were already looking ahead to a time when independence would be a reality. A

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in Lithuania—suggests that its founders were already looking ahead to a time when independence would be a reality. A leader of the Soviet loyalist *Yedinstvo* (Unity) movement, Valery Ivanov, expressed his unhappiness with this back in March: "I thought our position was that all people in Lithuania are Soviet citizens, because Lithuania is still a Soviet republic", he told me.

People like Ivanov are certainly *Pieds Noirs* in waiting. The question for the future of Russia's politics, as well as those of the Baltic, is whether at some stage they will find their equivalent of the French colonial paratroops who revolted against General de Gaulle. Ivanov's bitterness against the Communist Party officials and Army officers who run the Committee is explained by the fact that he has been shelved, for the moment at least, by Moscow's evident preference for dealing with the Russians and Poles in Lithuania through the old Communist Party structures, and not through a new-style populist movement, the "unreliable" *Yedinstvo*.

From Blockade to Confederation?

FAR FROM ACHIEVING its purpose of frightening the Lithuanians, Soviet pressure had exactly the reverse effect. Widespread worry about the timing of the declaration of independence and the fitness of the *Sajudis* government to rule was succeeded by public commitment to Professor Landsbergis and his leadership. This determination only grew as Soviet pressure increased.

It is, however, difficult to say what would have happened if the "blockade" had continued, and had led to real hardship. The more radical nationalists, who opposed a moratorium on the declaration of independence, were convinced that the resolve of the Lithuanian people would only have become stronger; and they may be right. There can certainly be no doubt of the fundamental commitment of the people to independence. On the other hand, when one of the Kaunas faction deputies, a poet named Kazas Saja, asked in parliament why those who advocated compromise because of energy shortages didn't take into account "the spiritual energy of the Lithuanian people", he apparently got a very dusty reply from his constituents when he met them a few days later.

It must be clearly stated that there was never a "blockade" in the generally accepted sense of the word—or if it was a blockade, it had a remarkable number of holes in it. From beginning to end, at the sight of the city's shops, visitors from Moscow to Vilnius were still exclaiming, "We should have such a blockade!" There were not even cuts in power or gas for domestic purposes, and the only discomforts most people suffered were petrol shortages and an intermittent lack of hot water. The lack of traffic and of street lighting did, however, make Vilnius a different, rather eerie place at night. It is only when the street lamps are cut off that one realises that most Westerners have never seen natural twilight in a city.

If there ever was any Soviet intention to impose a real blockade of most of the raw materials on its supposed "black list", it was rapidly undermined by Soviet Ministries. Soon after sanctions began, Anatoly Pushkin, Deputy Chairman of the Soviet Light Industries Commission, met the Lithuanian managers of the "All-Union" (Soviet-owned) factories in this sector (they make up the great bulk of Lithuanian light industry). He let them know that his Ministry would do its best to ensure normal supplies of raw materials and components if they in their turn would ignore the Lithuanian government's decree banning "exports" to the Soviet Union. A few weeks later, the Chairman of Gosplan in Moscow gave similar assurances to another group of managers.

On the Lithuanian side, there was never any attempt to put the ban on industrial exports into general effect. Nor did anyone implement the Lithuanian government's draconian measures against black marketeers in petrol. That would, indeed, have been rather ungrateful since the black market did a pretty good job of keeping Lithuania supplied.

Two factors saved Lithuania from more serious sanctions. The first was the centralisation of the Soviet economy, which has tended to give single factories a near-monopoly of certain products throughout the Union as a whole. For example, closing the television tubes factory in Kaunas would have meant shutting down much of the Soviet television industry. The second factor was the increasing chaos in the Soviet economy, coupled with the rise of social unrest. This gave Lithuania opportunities to make barter deals with local Soviet authorities and enterprises which were desperate for food to stave off popular unrest. The Lithuanian threat of greatly reducing food supplies to Moscow and Leningrad caused real alarm in those cities' councils, and Leningrad struck a deal to supply sugar in return for milk and meat. I spoke to the director of one machine-tools factory who was planning to give some of the factory's vehicles to a collective farm in return for food, which he was then going to send to a plant in Moldavia in return for metals supplies.

ONE FIELD in which Soviet sanctions could have had a really serious effect was food. The cut-off of oil to the refinery at Mazeikiai threatened Lithuania with the loss of much of its harvest, through lack of petrol for agricultural machinery and transport; when the oil embargo was lifted, the harvest was only a few weeks away. Even harvest losses, however, would have been due in part to lack of enterprise on the part of collective farmers. Anne Imse, from Associated Press, visited a cattle farm where she was told that there was no longer any transport to take the beasts to the slaughterhouse.

"How far is the slaughterhouse?"

"Twelve kilometres."

"Why don't you drive them there on foot?"

"But they would run away!"

I visited two collective farms lying side by side in the district of Kedainiai. In one, the management was lamenting the imminent loss of the harvest for lack of petrol. In the other, the managers had sent emissaries to Estonia and Byelorussia, offering food and money in return for petrol. They expected to bring in the whole crop.

In Klaipeda and other areas, according to the Lithuanian

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Agriculture Ministry, Soviet soldiers helped Lithuanian farmers not just by selling them Army petrol, but by loaning Army trucks to bring in the harvest, in return for food—a detail which suggests some Roman frontier legion under the later Caesars, doing deals with local tribes as supplies from the centre broke down.

In any case, the drastic weakening of Mr Gorbachov in the intervening few months makes it impossible to speak of him having "won" through his sanctions against Lithuania, and I very much doubt that it will be seen that way in future. To a great extent, the strategy of the Lithuanians has been vindicated: to lay down legal principles and then wait for events elsewhere in the Union to undermine Mr Gorbachov. For the key point is that Gorbachov has not been able to force the Lithuanians to cancel their declaration. They have merely agreed to suspend it when talks begin, and only for the period of the talks.

At the moment, it looks as if all three Baltic governments will refuse to join Mr Gorbachov's proposed new Soviet Confederal constitution, or "Union Treaty". The Lithuanians do not even mean to take part in discussing it; Latvian and Estonian representatives will do so simply by virtue of continuing to sit in the Congress of People's Deputies and the Supreme Soviet in Moscow during the "transitional period" to full independence announced by their individual parliaments.

The central political question in the Baltic over the next few months is likely to be whether the huge Russian populations in Latvia and Estonia can force these republics to remain, however distantly, part of a Soviet confederation, or whether the national movements will hold out successfully for full independence, with no commitment to any future constitutional links with Russia. Certain moderate Popular Front deputies in Latvia have advocated confederation (defined as "a union of sovereign states", whatever that may be), and the former Communist government of Latvia suggested it to Mr Gorbachov this spring—a proposal which, if he ever has time these days to look back at the past, he must be wishing he had jumped at. His Union Treaty idea has been welcomed by some national movements in the republics, but in the words of a Latvian deputy:

> "The problem with Gorbachov is that he's always too late. A year ago, our national movements would have been delighted to be offered confederation; but now the declarations of independence have been made, and I can't see most of the Popular Fronts allowing us to compromise them."

If the Baltic republics do refuse to go along with creating a new Union Treaty, it will make it more likely that Georgia, together with other republics, will follow suit, provoking the collapse of the Soviet Union.

It is just possible, as Ilmars Bisers, the Latvian Deputy Prime Minister, has hinted, that the Baltic republics might be able to pass through a brief formal period of "unqualified" independence to a confederation agreed with Russia and other Soviet republics rather than with "the Soviet Union". Radicals accuse former and remaining national Communists in the Baltic of favouring continued Soviet links because they are still working for Moscow—and certainly in the case of certain Ministers from the old *apparat*, especially in Latvia, there are good grounds for fearing that they have links to the *KGB*. During the moratorium debate in Lithuania, a woman in a nationalist demonstration claimed that "Brazauskas knows that he and the Lithuanian Communists can stay in power in the long run only if Lithuania stays in the Soviet Union".

The motive of men like Mr Bisers in supporting confederation was above all because they saw it as a way of avoiding ethnic conflict with the Russian minorities, possibly increased by the economic disruption which would be caused if the loss of Soviet raw materials and markets long preceded new economic ties with the West. Moderates (pragmatists might be a better word) in the Baltic are acutely aware of just how difficult it is going to be for their republics to gain entry to the European Community, even if exit from the Soviet Union has been agreed and they are not suffering from ethnic disturbances.

Minorities & Majorities

The belief of Baltic radicals that the republics' natural place is in Western Europe is passionately held. However, their strong hostility to any future constitutional links with Russia is not simply a matter of emotional nationalism. It is based on real and very rational fears. These relate precisely to the presence of the Russian-speaking "immigrants". Since Soviet rule was imposed, their arrival (together with the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Balts under Stalin, and the flight of many others to the West) has reduced Latvians from around 75% of the population in 1940 to 52% today; and Estonians from over 90% to 61%.

The Lithuanians were luckier. As Catholics, they continued to produce more babies than the Protestant Estonians and Latvians. Less industrialised than the other republics before 1940, they had a bigger reserve of their own rural labour to fill the new factories; and, more importantly, Mr Snieckus, the Party boss in the 1950s, was able to resist some of the heavy industrialisation programmes which sucked Russians into the other republics. In Latvia, Party First Secretary Eduards Berklavs tried to resist Russification, but he was winkled out by Khrushchev and wound up as a film distribution official in central Russia. The Party was ruthlessly purged, damaging its national morale in ways that endure to the present. As for Mr Berklavs, he is today something of a national hero, and a deputy of the radical National Independence Movement (a member party of the Popular Front).

The entire ethnic Estonian population left in their republic amounts to only 960,000 people—fewer than in 1940—while the Latvians number only 1.415 million. Since they border on 140 million Russians, there is nothing paranoid about the belief of many Latvians and Estonians that they face national extinction in the long run if some sort of "wall" is not created between them and their Eastern neighbours and

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further immigration stopped. They want *real* power, police power, to stop the Russians already in the Baltic bringing in their relatives as "economic refugees", and thus saving them from the growing economic misery of Russia proper. This aspect of the economic decline of the rest of the Soviet Union compared to the Baltic is what makes things seem so urgent to the radicals.

In his inaugural speech as Latvian Deputy President in May (an occasion which the re-elected Communist President, Anatolys Gorbunovs, used to hold out an olive branch to the Russians), the Chairman of the Popular Front, Dainis Ivans, spoke of "the tragic fate which has befallen Russified Latvians, some of whom are in this parliament". Declaring "I am a Latvian. I am not ashamed to say this", Mr Ivans spoke of independence as "an absolute spiritual right for all peoples", and warned of national catastrophe if it were not achieved. By way of excuse for such language, so reminiscent of a disastrous European past, one must remember that Mr Ivans does have good grounds for the alarm he expresses.

Of course, future Russian immigration into the Baltic will also be an economic threat to the Russians already here, and fear of it is already affecting some of them. The Russians in the Baltic are increasingly aware of the economic misery of the east; and a good many of the younger Russians favour independence for this reason, or at least are prepared to accept it in the hope of economic improvement. This is something that the Baltic national movements could exploit to influence other local Russians—if they knew how to make contact with the Russian workers.

IT MAY BE that the Russians in Estonia and Latvia will not prove so much of an obstacle to the achievement of independence is anticipated, but that hereafter relations will get worse not better with time, because of the attitude of the new Baltic régimes. In the short term, Russian worker opposition may be dampened partly through awareness of the fact that they are better off in the Baltic than in Russia, and partly because the collapse of the Soviet government and Soviet ideology is likely for a while to leave them rudderless. Signs, of this are already appearing. Boris Yeltsin's victory, and his championship of Russia's own sovereignty, rendered Soviet loyalist leaders in the Baltic literally speechless for a while; and only now are they rallying once again round Gorbachov's Union Treaty idea.

The bewilderment of those Russians who are opposed to or fearful of independence is increased by the fact that their leaders are so closely tied to Soviet power. To say this is not to subscribe to the line of the Baltic national movements: that ordinary Russians who support the pro-Soviet opposition are simply dupes, manipulated by Communist propaganda and the old ruling *apparat*. Such arguments are to be distrusted in principle because they are just too convenient—they absolve the Baltic national leaderships from making any serious attempts to address local Russian fears and demands, attempts which would cause trouble with the Baltic radicals.

There are plenty of historical precedents for such an analysis being used to such a political and psychological end. In India, the way that Marxist historians of my acquaintance thump on—43 years after Independence—about the British responsibility for the rise of "communal" politics is an excuse not to address directly the reasons for Muslim and Sikh unhappiness with Hindu majority rule, or what this means for Indian policies today. The Balts, having rejected Marxism, do not use the term "false consciousness" to describe the misguided behaviour of the Russian workers, but the principle is exactly the same.

THAT BEING SAID, the Soviet *apparat* in the Baltic is of course very much behind the Soviet loyalist forces. New political leaders have begun to appear, but only slowly. This is a cause of weakness rather than strength in the opposition. As I have found when talking to Russian-speaking workers in all three republics, most are as disillusioned as anyone else in the Soviet Union with the rule of the *apparat* and the old Party bosses, and this undermines their morale and their willingness to take any action that might cost them money or their jobs. As Valery Ivanov said about the Party leadership in Lithuania: "They have the old sickness. They give orders, instead of listening to what the workers have to say."

A special feature of the Russian minorities in Latvia and Estonia compared to other Soviet republics is the leading role played in their public lives by retired Soviet officers. The Baltic has long been a favourite place of retirement for them, and to the fury of the indigenous populations, they have been given jobs in the municipal bureaucracy and are sent to the top of the housing lists. The lack of natural, developed social structures in the overwhelmingly working-class immigrant populations of these republics has meant that such officers have emerged in a leading political role. They keep close links to serving officers, who are also much in evidence at Soviet loyalist rallies. These have their own socio-economic grievances, as soldiers from Eastern Europe pour back into the Soviet Union to find themselves without housing, jobs for their wives, or access to locally rationed goods.

During the demonstration in Riga on 15 May (it was overwhelmingly made up of officers and cadets) I found myself jammed next to an Air Force Captain. I suggested to him that in the British armed forces this kind of thing would be considered a mite undisciplined. "If we were paid as much as British officers, do you think we'd be here either?" was his frank response.

What this military-political tie-up will lead to in the long run is impossible to say. At the moment, the Soviet armed forces seem in a state of complete bewilderment about their future role. Young officers are unanimously in favour of a professional, volunteer army, but have little idea how to achieve this aim unless a great deal more money is forthcoming. However, this state of paralysis will presumably not last for ever. In the Baltic, as in the Caucasus and the Western Ukraine, the Army has given up on conscription, although Russian youths, under social pressure from their communities, still turn up for the draft, and I have met plenty of unskilled Russian youths who would probably be only too willing to enlist as soldiers if the alternative was unemployment.

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During the Russian strike against independence in Estonia in late May, I visited Baltribprom, the fishing port in Tallinn, which services the big Atlantic trawlers. Its workers were among the most hardline supporters of the strike. One of the main leaders of the opposition in Estonia is Valdimir Yarovoi, director of the Dvigatel factory. When I asked the workers about him, the response of several was vituperative. "Don't talk to us about Yarovoi", an older man said. "What has he ever done for the workers, least of all in his own factory? But where can we find leaders of our own?" Later, walking with him past one of the huge posters of Lenin which are still very apparent in Russian workplaces in the Baltic, I asked if he thought Lenin had really done so much for Russia. He shrugged his shoulders, rather sadly I thought. "I don't know", he said. "For me Lenin is a symbol of progressive forces in general. And every country has national monuments. In England you have them too, don't you?"

This is just it. The Russian workers in the Baltic are to a certain extent the only pure Soviet people—*Homo Sovieticus*, as the Balts say, with quite deliberate pithecanthropoid associations. They have been separated from their Russian traditions to an even greater degree than the proletariat in Russia itself. Although in Latvia the Orthodox Church is making some progress among them, in Tallinn it is very weak. Where are the Russian workers to get new symbols from? And what will they be?

Only two men at the strike meeting at Baltribprom opposed the strike. One was the personnel chief, a Communist and ex-Army Commissar called Filonenko. He argued for the need to find a way of getting on with the Estonians, and not to risk their jobs. The response was furious, almost violent:

"Parasite! You've been giving us bullshit for years, and now you're telling us to calm down when we're fighting for our rights! Provocateur!"

"It's just the privileged ones like you who want compromise. You're going to do a deal with the Estonians, you opportunist, and leave us in the same old shit!"

There was no mistaking here the strong element of bewildered frustration in the Russian workers' approach to their leaders. But when a young fork-lift truck driver started making essentially the same points as Filonenko, though they argued with him they did listen to what he had to say.

It would be wrong to view the "All-Union" factories like Dvigatel, with their Russian workforces, simply as Soviet loyalist fortresses in Estonia. Even at Dvigatel, the Party chief, Mr Disorenko, is (like Filonenko, but apparently with more success) a moderate, opposed to Yarovoi. He supports Estonian independence in principle, and told me that I should not take Yarovoi as symbolic of the factory. However, he also spoke of their very real mistrust of Estonian intentions—and to a degree the Russians had very good reason to be mistrustful.

It would be pleasant to think that people like the young driver at Baltribprom represent the next generation of Russian leaders in the Baltic, perhaps emerging through new trades unions. Unfortunately, he will have a fight on his hands with another type which has already established a strong position: the chauvinist demogogues. These may initially have been raised up by the Communist Party, but the most extreme of them (like Yevgeni Kogan—one of the few men I have met who actually does radiate wickedness—and Mikhail Lysenko) are new men, who have made a name through organisational skills and a talent for rabble-rousing.

Lysenko is a former policeman dismissed for allegedly raffling-off recovered stolen property. A very tough-looking individual, he habitually wears a leather jacket. A colleague of mine was at the riotous demonstration outside the Estonian parliament on 15 May (whatever the government press offices said, it was not an "attempted coup", any more than the one I attended the same day in Riga). She told me of her impression that Yarovoi was genuinely alarmed by Lysenko's whipping up of the crowd, and had wanted to calm them down. If so, Yarovoi wouldn't be the first Old Guardist in history to call Frankenstein's monster to his aid and then lose control of him. The Russian workers are naturally receptive to the Lysenkos, and the Party has prepared the way with its propaganda about Estonian fascists, and concocted stories about "1,000 Kalashnikovs and 4,000 Makarov pistols" being landed for the Estonian Home Guard, or plans to bulldoze Russian cemeteries.

In both Latvia and Estonia, open splits have appeared in the Russian ranks. The key figures for the future as far as compromise is concerned are not, it seems to me, the handful of Russian intellectuals in the Popular Fronts, whom Western journalists usually interview as representative of "pro-independence Russians". These people are thoroughly honourable, but they are distant from the masses and have few political skills. They are also largely ignored by the Popular Fronts, except when trotted out on ritual occasions to symbolise Russian popular support. At the mass rally of Latvian municipal deputies which called upon the parliament to declare independence, not a single non-Latvian (48% of the population) was invited to speak. Moreover, these people have no hold on the Russian bureaucracy.

The increasingly hopelessness of the Soviet Union in its present form is leading in Latvia to a split in the "Interfront". One of the leaders of the more moderate wing, which opposed the strikes and military demonstrations, is Anatoly Belaichuk, the Aeroflot chief in Riga. A young Russian Communist from the small town of Cesis (Wendon) explained why he supported him. "You will find that most of the Russians from outside the big cities tend to support Belaichuk's position, because we know that in the long run we have to get on with the Latvians. In Cesis, we even have contacts with the Popular Front." He expects that in the long run Belaichuk will aim at compromise with the Popular Front, accepting independence in return for guarantees for the non-Latvians. "But this is probably some way in the future."

Another split tends to run through the Russian working class, between the skilled and technical workers (who tend not to be so worried about their jobs, and are opposed to independence but in a fairly restrained sort of way) and the heavy industrial workers. The latter sometimes seem to

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resemble "the Dark People", the peasants of Russian 19th-century literature: gloomy, silent and unknowable, with violence not far away. When they do speak out, their ideas are sometimes rather odd. A group of workers in New Vilnius told me that "In Brezhnev's time we had *glasnost*! We had democracy! We could vote for whoever we liked!" At which point I gave a cackle, and almost got beaten up. Here, the image of morlocks being herded around by *apparatchiks* does seem apposite.

The Russian position in Estonia depends critically on what happens in the north-east, around the town of Narva. This area, with its large Russian majority, lies on the border of the Russian federation. Threats have intermittently been raised that it may secede to join Russia if Estonia becomes independent, and in late May the Soviet loyalist opposition set up a governing council to coordinate the work of the Russian municipal authorities in the area. Most of these are, however, extremely sceptical of the plan, according to Mr Kuzmin, the chairman of the East Vilnius District Council: ordinary Russians in the area have little desire to split off from Estonia.

Even some of those who support Estonian independence favour this "governing council", because, in the words of a worker, Vitaly Preobrazhensky, "It gives us a body which the Estonians will be forced to negotiate with on equal terms. Our deputies in parliament are no good, because they are in a hopeless minority, and the Estonians will keep them that way by rigging the elections." He was referring not to actual ballot-rigging, but to the widespread gerrymandering of constituency boundaries to produce as few Russian-majority constituencies as possible. This was largely responsible for producing the two-thirds Latvian and Estonian majorities for the declarations of legal independence by the parliaments of these two republics, although support from younger Russians, and the apathy of others, also played its part. But my impression is that Mr Gerry Mander was the real hero of the hour.

THERE IS A general tendency for the Russians to have fewer deputies per head of population than the indigenous populations: thus among the electoral wards of the Tallinn municipal council, Maarduski, with a mainly Russian population, has 10,793 voters, while Vanalinaski, an Estonian district, has only 3,602. Among constituencies for the Estonian parliament, the Estonian area of Khijumaski has 7,800 voters for two deputies, while a mainly Russian Tallinn constituency has almost 30,000 voters. The ward boundaries in Vilnius are strangely contorted—also, I suspect, with the intention of producing Lithuanian majorities whenever possible in a largely Polish and Russian city. One can well understand how the local governments—the previous Communist ones, one should note—felt justified in using such methods, after all the frauds of various kinds employed by Moscow; but it is hardly surprising that the local Russian population is not developing any great faith in the ballot box as a way of solving its problems.

The dangerous thing about such a "body to negotiate with the Estonians on equal terms" is that in certain circumstances it too could escape from the intentions of its supporters. One persuasive theory about Jinnah's project of Pakistan is that initially he never meant it to become a fully independent state: it was simply a device to force the "Hindu" Congress majority to grant fifty-fifty parity to Muslims within a loose confederal India. Unfortunately the Congress refused to deal on these terms; the Pakistan idea got loose from its pragmatic founder; and 50 years later it is still at large, albeit looking none too well. However, the coordinating council has now virtually collapsed due to lack of support from the Russian local authorities.

Fears & Hatreds

WILL THE LEADERS OF THE Baltic national movements be prepared to make concessions to men like Mr Belaichuk, or will they rely on Mr Mander to go on coping with the problem that Belaichuk presents? The attitude of all too many Baltic nationalists to the Russian-speaking populations was summed up, accurately enough, by a Jewish friend in Tallinn, a strong supporter of Estonian independence. She spoke of "the unforgivable mistake of our Popular Front leaders in not appealing to the Russians from the very day the national movement was founded. They did not do this because they hate them."

For this pure flower of hatred one does indeed have to go to Estonia. It is bad enough, God knows, in the other republics as well; but the Lithuanians, at 80% of the population of their republic, do not feel nearly so threatened. Latvians are even more under threat of extinction, but because Riga was always a great cosmopolitan city, and historically mainly non-Latvian, they have had plenty of practice over the years at getting along with people of other races. Traditionally, the Russians were their allies against the Germans. The Russian community in Riga is far older than that in Vilnius or Tallinn, and there has been more intermarriage with the Latvians, although I have heard of a number of such marriages breaking up in the past year because of ethnic tensions.

The Estonians in the past were even more of a closed, peasant nation than the other Balts. They are close culturally to Scandinavia, resembling a form of oppressed Swede. For me, their national character is summed up pretty well by their national anthem, which is modelled on one of those implacable Protestant hymn tunes like *Old Hundredth*. The cultural and spiritual differences between them and the Russians cannot be exaggerated. The Russians who have come to live in Estonia are overwhelmingly poor and uneducated, and more than usually given over to slovenliness and vodka. The Estonians associate their arrival with political tyranny, steep economic decline, and the brutalisation of social behaviour. The favourite label of the Estonian and Latvian nationalists for the Russians is "Asiatics", and the racist overtones are entirely deliberate.

Whenever an Estonian undergoes strong emotions, it is to the background noise of popping buttons, as natural reflexes strive to suppress any outward show. They are perhaps the most repressed people of my acquaintance—and, speaking as a half Baltic German, half Irish Catholic, I know something about this. Ask an Estonian about the Russians, and

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the popping rises to a veritable fusillade. Taking an Estonian interpreter to a rally of Interfront, the Soviet loyalist movement which is dominated by the sort of workers sketched above, I felt emanating from her perhaps the strongest atmosphere of physical loathing, verging on stifled hysteria, that I have ever encountered. This is understandable, but not vastly encouraging for the future.

Estonian hatred of the Russians, and fear of Russian cultural influence on their tiny nation, is such that many Estonians are not at heart even interested in getting local Russians to learn Estonian—supposedly a central plank of government policy. In the words of Tarmu Tammerk, editor of the English-language *Estonian Independent*, "If these hundreds of thousands of Russians were in fact to learn Estonian, it would debase our language. We would all end up speaking a sort of Russified pidgin. So I am not in favour of making knowledge of the Estonian language compulsory." In fact, whatever the official rules, unspoken but almost universal Estonian feeling is already making fluent knowledge of Estonian—an extremely difficult language, which the Russians have never previously had to know—a prerequisite of entry into specialised forms of high education. Knowledge of Estonian is undoubtedly going to be a criterion for a great many jobs; and, to judge by Mr Tammerk's words, it is not the Russians who are going to get them.

Over the years, the Russians have behaved with crushing insensitivity towards the Estonians, and the Estonians, understandably enough, seem well on the way to retaliating in kind. This was symbolised by the Cabinet chosen by Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar, in which only one Minister out of twenty is Russian—in a country with a Russian-speaking population of 39%. Baltic nationalists, including Dr Savisaar, justify such figures by saying that "There are no reliable candidates"; but this sits oddly with their claim that large sections of the Russian population support Estonian independence.

When pressed, the same people who have previously claimed this widespread Russian support sometimes change tack and start pointing out that Russian candidates who support the national movements fail to get elected by their fellow Russians, backing this statement by the argument that it is impossible to appoint such figures because "they don't represent anyone". Often the reason for this shift seems to be precisely in order to avoid addressing the issue of Russian participation in government.

But this problem is going to become central in the next few months because of the question of citizenship, which will have to be discussed as part of talks with Moscow. The Soviet attitude has not yet become clear, although I have given my guess at some aspects of it. The Baltic national movements have yet to make up their minds about what to offer, and the Russian populations about what to accept. Proposals on the Baltic side range from the Zero Variant (that all residents should be offered citizenship) to the suggestion that at present the only legal citizens are those of the old Baltic republics and their descendants, and that others will be admitted only on proof of lengthy residence, knowledge of the indigenous language, or both.

This proposal tends to emanate from the Latvian and Estonian Congresses, elected by former citizens and their descendants, and dominated by nationalist hardliners. In the words of Tunne Kelam, Chairman of the Estonian Congress, "The Russians who have moved to Estonia have no more right to ask for 'guarantees' of their position than Mexican illegal immigrants in the United States. However, they have nothing to worry about, because we are prepared to offer them all the rights enjoyed by Turkish workers in West Germany." These words are all the more hair-raising because they were seriously intended to sound magnanimous—Dr Kelam is a very nice man, when he is among people whom he considers to be human beings.

The Presence of the Past

RUSSIANS IN THE BALTIC are habitually referred to, even by pro-independence Russians, as a "Fifth Column" against independence. This has always been saddening for Russian intellectuals who wish to support independence and stay in the Baltic on friendly terms with the local population. The result tends to be the "Latvianisation"—or whatever—of such people, until by the next generation they feel themselves to be completely indigenous. But this in turn tends to destroy their capacity to be *interlocuteurs valables* between the new national régimes and the bulk of the Russian populations, who don't want to become Latvianised, and couldn't do so anyway because of their lack of education.

The problem was summed up for me by Dr Eugenius Petrovas, a member of the Lithuanian Praesidium. He stood for election from a mainly Russo-Polish Vilnius constituency under his Russian name, Yevgeni Petrov, but in the parliament he introduces himself, even to Western journalists, as Petrovas. This is not simply a question of a Lithuanian version of his name; it is a completely different identity. Dr Petrovas went out of his way to stress to me that he felt no special kinship with, or responsibility for, the Russian nation as a whole, outside Lithuania's borders. "As a citizen of Lithuania, my whole loyalty must be to Lithuania", he told me. Which is estimable, but where does it leave those tens of millions of people across the Soviet Union whom circumstances virtually compel to feel mixed loyalties? This is the quite successful revenge of the local peoples against all attempts to "Russify" them.

The presence of the masses of unassimilable Russians heightens the feeling among Baltic nationalists of being in a state of siege, and tends to encourage authoritarian attitudes in people who have, after all, been brought up in the Soviet system. Thus Dr Virgilijus Cepaitis, a leader of the radical nationalist "Kaunas Faction" of *Sajudis* (now "the Party of March 11th") told me at the height of the Soviet pressure on Lithuania that the Lithuanian press had no right to criticise decisions of the *Sajudis*-dominated Lithuanian parliament, "because these reflect the will of the nation". He added that "In a war, you have to decide whether you will stand with the nation or undermine it from within", and accused the press in general of being under the control of of Brazauskas's Lithuanian Communist Party.

Because of Lithuania's history and position, the nationalist

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intelligentsia is always in danger of regarding the whole of Lithuanian history as a kind of siege, and of insisting "If you are not for us, you are against us"—a spiritual tendency which tends to produce the rapid assimilation of the friendly Russian intellectuals I have spoken of. Because in the past outside cultural influences, under Poles and Germans as well as Russians, threatened to destroy the Lithuanian identity, and actually did so in several areas, resisting such influence, or strengthening "national traditions" with the underlying aim of resisting it, can become the dominant theme in cultural as well as political life. Last week, I was discussing pornography with an acquaintance at dinner—the subject having been provoked by some mildly risqué photographs in the local press which have got the Church here in a terrible flutter. This journalist attacked the photographs not on the grounds of religion, or decency, or human dignity, but because "We have a particular national tradition, which we cannot afford to have compromised". Thanks to Soviet rule, intellectual life in general here has been half-frozen in the past, and this kind of approach to the nation merely adds to its curiously antique, almost pre-1914 air.

In general, I entirely sympathise with the desire of Balts not to open their countries to a flood of Western materialism; and one of the reasons is that if Lithuanian youths are tempted by Western advertising to hope for goods that they cannot in fact receive for a considerable time to come, then the existence of such a strong nationalist current in the tradition creates the danger of some kind of backlash. I was made aware of this possibility when visiting a group of the *Siauliai*, a nationalist volunteer force which is widely thought to be practising with rifles in the woods, though they swore to me that their training is purely in unarmed combat. Some of these shaven-headed young men looked thuggish in the extreme, while others (perhaps more alarmingly) looked quiet enough at heart but were obviously doing their best to look murderous. They say that their job will be to "keep order". One of the reasons why nationalist leaders still think they might be needed is the Russo-Polish majority in the Vilnius police. *Sajudis* volunteers of the same type form President Landsbergis's bodyguard.

THE *SIAULIAI* OFFICIAL who took me to see these young men exercising was himself an old partisan, a "Forest Brother" from the guerrilla struggle against Soviet oppression in the 1940s; he had been captured, and spent eight years in Siberia. As if sensing my unease, he took me afterwards to see an exhibition of Lithuanian village art, which is now undergoing a great revival. He talked of the rootedness of Lithuanian culture in the land, in a particular sense of place; of its fundamentally placid, homely, unaggressive character. "What you have just seen is not natural to us", he said. "It comes from having lived under Soviet rule." By and large, I felt he was right. The bulk of ordinary Lithuanians I have spoken with have been committed patriots, but not aggressively so, and certainly not given to expressing their feelings in extravagant language.

The difference between them and the approach of many of the *Sajudis* leaders is so striking that the only answer must be that although Lithuanians may be reserved in language themselves, in the case of the intelligentsia from the liberal arts something in the national culture creates a sort of Emotional-Flowery Rhetoric Exam for those who want to become National Figures. If they fail this test, in some obscure way they feel they've failed not only public expectations, but also the teachers who crammed them with all those similes about sunbeams and such.

It doesn't work so well with outsiders, though, and all that stuff, directed at Moscow, about "the ghost of Stalin stalking the Kremlin and its shadow falling far to the West" in the first weeks after the declaration of independence is said to have got Mrs Thatcher's goat as well as Mr Gorbachov's. At least, she is reported to have given the Lithuanian Prime Minister an earful on the subject of unnecessary provocation when they met in London—perhaps rather unfairly, since Mrs Prunskiene is innocent on this score.

THESE ASPECTS OF Lithuanian public life today have been criticised by a small but prestigious group of Lithuanian intellectuals who make up the "Liberals' Club". They are bitterly opposed to the "Kaunas Faction", and what they see as its fascistic tendencies; they have become hostile to President Landsbergis in direct proportion to the degree that the state media have tried to build him up as Father of the Nation. One of them, Dr Arvydas Sliogeris, writing in the *Sajudis* weekly, *Atgimimas* (which shows that *Sajudis* does have very genuine democratic aspects), set off a great controversy by warning Lithuanians of the danger of getting stuck in what he called "ritual politics", in which would-be charismatic politicians rise not through competence or argument, but by repeating "sacred formulae" about the nation, its sufferings, and its glories. He pointed out that "national freedom" by no means necessarily implies freedom for the individual—a most important point to make because, obvious as it is, it comes as a real shock to many educated Lithuanians of my acquintance.

The liberals' best moment came when they helped to defeat a proposal at the *Sajudis* Congress in May that the present loose umbrella movement should be transformed into a regular, disciplined political party. This proposal emanated from the "Kaunas Faction" radicals, and carried with it the obvious danger that their supporters, dominant among the active cadres, would soon take over such a party and drive out all those who disagreed with them. Given the weakness of political structures and of the democratic tradition, Lithuania might end up with a kind of nationalist one-party rule, as in the 1930s under the independent republic. The problem is that unless *Sajudis* does in fact at some stage transform itself into such a party, these factors also make it difficult to see how the country can be run after the unifying effects of the struggle with the Soviet Union wear off.

In this sense, Lithuania is looking ahead to the sort of problems already affecting Poland. It is also enmeshed in that other key question affecting Eastern Europe: the role of former or present Communists. One of the things which has driven a wedge between Prime Minister Prunskiene's Cabinet and the *Sajudis* majority in parliament is the Communist presence in the government. But what to do? Most

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people made compromises of some kind, and none of the main *Sajudis* figures, radicals or moderates, was an active dissident against Soviet rule before Mr Gorbachov made this relatively safe.

Another reason for the conflict is that *Sajudis* is completely conditioned to be a party of opposition, and is finding it very difficult to learn the responsibilities of being a majority in parliament. This would probably be the case even if the deputies approved of the government. This psychological tendency will probably be causing chaos in former Soviet republics for years if not decades to come. The danger of parliamentary anarchy which may threaten if *Sajudis* does not remain dominant is illustrated by the liberals themselves. Some of Dr Sliogeris's colleagues have spoken of the need for a second, "intellectual", *Sajudis* to be in "permanent opposition to whatever government is in power. . . ."

THE DANGERS OF the growth of a new cultural totalitarianism (if only in the form of an unbroken diet of folk music on television, fast becoming a plague across the Soviet Union) stem partly from the fact that modern Lithuanian "higher culture" was deliberately put together by nationalist intellectuals from the mid-19th century onwards, precisely in order to be a National Culture for what had previously been a country of peasants under Polish, Russian, and German rule. It was therefore marked from the first by a certain unitary spirit, although tension did exist between this new intellectual culture and the Catholic Church. The influence of the Church, however, is limited compared to Poland—Lithuanians tend to be mystical rather than religious in the Catholic sense, and take strict Catholic theology and thought fairly lightly.

At the moment, to fill the gap left by Communism, there is a certain revival here of mystical cults—a tendency with a long pedigree in Lithuania, and to a lesser extent in Latvia too. (The Estonians tend to be harder-headed.) This is accompanied by an artistic revival, using themes from the old, pagan religion. Lithuania was the last pagan country in Europe, not even officially converted until 1385. Since this conversion came about as part of a royal marriage with Poland, and led eventually to Polonisation of the Church and the upper classes, parts of the nationalist intelligentsia have a slightly ambiguous attitude towards Christianity. They prefer a vague mysticism, with what would now be called "ecological" attributes. (Lithuania must be the only country in the world where the head of the nationalist paramilitaries-in-waiting is also leader of the Green movement.)

The subject of President Landsbergis's academic thesis—the composer and painter Mikuolas Ciurlionis—stands squarely at the centre of this crossing of mystical and national concerns. He played a great part in creating in the 19th century what has since in a sense (the Soviet government disapproved intensely of Ciurlionis) been the Lithuanian state culture, the culture of the state in hiding, to be reborn. President Landsbergis's grandparents, one a philologist who in a sense created modern Lithuanian, the other a playwright, were at the centre of this movement.

The President's family tradition was a major factor in gaining him the leadership of *Sajudis*. He was regarded as a kind of hereditary constitutional monarch, and so in a sense he has proved, manoeuvering adroitly between the factions of this fissiparous umbrella group, and usually doing his best to keep his head down, well out of the firing line. Western observers of his tactics have been torn between exasperation and admiration. To take one example, for weeks after he had himself apparently accepted that compromise with Moscow was inevitable, he continued to allow Mrs Prunskiene to take the full brunt of urging it in public.

A Lithuanian-Canadian friend, who has worked closely with Landsbergis, is patriotic but eminently level-headed, and not blind to his faults. He spoke of him as follows.

> "I admire Landsbergis because he has this very deep feeling for Lithuanian culture, for what Lithuania is and should be. Most people have lost this under Soviet rule, and so don't see this aspect of Landsbergis and don't appreciate him properly; but it explains his hold on the intelligentsia."

DESTRUCTION OF the propertied classes and independent trades unions under Communism has left the intelligentsia, all over the Soviet Union, as the obvious leaders of revolt against Soviet rule. A surprising number of the leaders of the national movements in the Baltic are in fact "bourgeois intellectuals", with traditions going back to the old republics and beyond. An old lady in Tallinn described to me how the more self-conscious parts of the old "grand bourgeoisie" maintained their identity and morale through five decades:

> "My friends and I used to keep an eye on ourselves and each other, not just over what we said but the way we said it. We wanted to avoid at all costs falling into Soviet ways of thinking and horrible Soviet phraseology, which has spoiled the Russian language and damaged Estonian too."

The intelligentsia from the liberal arts and the law, in all three Baltic republics, are in alliance with younger technocrats who have come over from the Soviet governing élite—people like Mrs Prunskiene and the Estonian Prime Minister Edgar Savisaar. As in these two cases, many of the technocrats are economists, though that description needs to be treated with some care. In Afghanistan any aspiring field commander with a secondary school education is called "Engineer"—the implication being, in some strange transcendental way, that he has access to the mysteries of the West, an intellectual equivalent of the hidden parts of the Stinger missile. In the Baltic, calling somebody an economist, when they're actually something else entirely, has an incantatory quality—it symbolises hope that they will pull something out of a pot and cure society's ills.

In Latvia and Lithuania, people with real experience of economic management are strikingly absent from the national movements. One reason for this is that they have been too closely identified with the old *apparat*, but it also means that the new governments are dependent on old Com-

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munist officials for expertise. In Estonia, which has led the way in economic reform, industrial managers have played a strong supporting role for the Popular Front. They are grouped in the Estonian League of Work Collectives, which claims 400,000 members—in other words, the entire ethnic Estonian workforce. It is, however, almost entirely dominated by the Estonian section of the existing Soviet management, many of whom hope to become private entrepreneurs—at which point their interests and those of their workforces may diverge quite sharply.

Class divisions within the Baltic nations have been masked by the need for a common struggle against the Russians, and by the fact that in Latvia and Estonia the overwhelming majority of the industrial working class is in fact Russian. However, divisions become apparent if you have lived here for a while, and this partly accounts for the fact that President Landsbergis is still less popular than the Communist Party Chief and former President, Algirdas Brazauskas, and Mrs Prunskiene. Lithuanian workers tend to see Landsbergis as an impractical musicologist from a privileged background.

An element of class may also be a reason for the surprisingly enduring popularity of the Lithuanian Communist Party—more than anywhere else in the former Communist world, perhaps, apart from Yugoslavia and Romania. The Communists did, after all, make great efforts to recruit their future officials from workers and peasants, for ideological reasons and to make sure that they could be indoctrinated in that ideology. The result is that some at least of these Communists are more capable of a "populist" approach than Landsbergis and his ilk. Soviet culture has also deliberately fostered working-class dislike of "intellectuals", and preference for "men of action". Something of this remains. It may lie behind the increasing perception of the parliament as a useless intellectuals' talking-shop; and it must be admitted that the parliament's practical record has in fact been pretty dismal.

THE COMMUNIST hold is particularly strong in the countryside—and here the power of the collective-farm managers plays an important part. Many of these figures are doing their bit to hinder agricultural reform. They are even more evident in the Latvian Parliament than in the other two. Among Latvians, the Communist Party has collapsed but the strength of these men's local position (they are all without exception men) means that no less than 23 of them have been elected to a 198-member parliament.

They are grouped in the Agrarian Association, whose chief, Albert Kauls, is chairman of a prizewinning collective farm near Riga and a member of Mr Gorbachov's Presidential Council. The presence of so many figures from the old *apparat* in the Popular Front is deeply worrying to Latvian radicals, who suspect that these men would even have voted against the declaration of independence had they dared. Another thing which worries them is the presence of some of the old bureaucrats with suspected *KGB* links. In the case of the Interior Ministry, the Popular Front's initial choice as Minister had to be withdrawn after pressure from Moscow and, much more importantly, from the (mainly Russian) Riga police. In Tallinn, the police force is also mainly Russian, and has apparently succeeded in getting the new government to shelve plans for a new volunteer police force recruited from Estonians. However, the Minister of the Interior there tells me that in September they plan to press ahead with an oath of loyalty to independent Estonia for the force. It will be interesting to see if they go ahead with this, or whether it is fudged into something less clear-cut, inoffensive to the feelings of a Russian constable.

By way of a sweetener for this unappetising morsel, the government has declared that "in order to strengthen the battle against crime", the wages of policemen in Tallinn are to be doubled over the next few years. Meanwhile, increased recruitment of Estonians is proceeding cautiously through a new Police College with a small yearly intake.

Possibilities

IT WOULD BE UNWISE these days to make any concrete predictions concerning the future of any part of what is now the Soviet Union. At the moment, however, the situation in the Baltic looks more hopeful than could have been predicted a few months ago. In both Latvia and Estonia, the attempts of hardline Soviet loyalists to create Russian mass movements against independence have fallen flat. Unemployment and inflation could revive them, but may well be cancelled out by the fact that by the time this stage in local economic restructuring is reached, the economic situation in Russia is likely to be even more miserable. The Finns are already preparing contingency plans in case masses of Russian economic refugees start trying to cross their frontier.

Developments in the Baltic, even after "independence" is achieved, will continue to be influenced by those in Russia; a fact emphasised by the effect on the Baltic Russians of Boris Yeltsin's victory. In the long run, two processes in Russia are likely to be of crucial importance.

The first is that of general economic development. If in the short term Russian poverty is helping Baltic independence by discouraging the local Russians, in the longer term the prosperity of those republics will depend very heavily on Russia's development.

The central hope of Baltic economic planners is for the republics to play Hong Kong to Russia's China. But this depends on Russia behaving like China and advancing economically. Without benefit of the advantages they now possess from being tied into the Soviet economic system, the Baltic states would simply be competing with the rest of Eastern Europe for a Western cake which may already have been largely shared out. The resulting disappointment for Baltic youths, who think independence will take them straight to Western Europe, could have some bitter political results. Moreover, continued economic misery in Russia is likely to provoke continued attempts to migrate to the Baltic, thereby preventing any reduction of racial tensions.

The other question is whether traditional Russian nationalism, as it revives, will content itself with re-establishing "the Russian identity" within the borders of the Russian

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Federation, or will remember the words of the "White" General Anton Ivanovich Denikin in the 1920s, after the White defeat and the Soviet reconstruction of the Russian Empire:

> "The state link between Russia and her borderlands . . . would have been restored by any government—White, Red, Pink or Black—which did not want to suffocate within the borders to which the war and internal chaos had confined us."

In the short term, there is unlikely to be enough material for such *revanchisme* among the Russian populations of the Baltic. In this region, at least, the Empire will go on falling to pieces peacefully enough. However, if in the longer term Latvia and Estonia are to enjoy internal peace, their new ruling groups will have to accept that the greater part of the Russian populations are there to stay. They will have to give them a share in the new states. Given the depth of the ethnic divide, and the low economic and educational level of most of the Russian workers, their safe integration into the social and political order would probably require some kind of formal power-sharing agreement and state affirmative action to improve their educational possiblities. The more radical Baltic nationalists, who still hope that in one way or another the Russians can be made to leave, would certainly resist any such action by the Baltic governments. But without moves in this direction, the republics may carry with them into independence a grumbling ulcer in their bellies.

Meetings

I think the soft blue ghost
of a baby you had lost
hung over our first meeting.
I was invited to talk,
to be a stranger and distracting,
but neither of us spoke.

I remember the Russian icons
cut from magazines
and glued on cheap black wood.
I remember the apple trees
behind the semi, the unmowed
grass lapping our knees.

I saw your beauty then
as you stepped into the garden.
But now I see what courage
you must have had, to face us
with your tray of cremated sausage,
bare, in that thin sad dress.

This time you're wearing trousers,
and offer a plate of samosas,
and look pregnant. But this
re-alignment of lips is not
a smile but a goodbye kiss.
This growth will take you with it:

You have begun to slide,
in your oriental bed,
towards your last birth.
But how easily we talk!—
of your young hand; of earth
you will soon be salting; of some book.

Alistair Elliot

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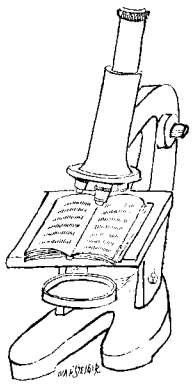
A Symposium

Who was Right, Who was Wrong, & Why

An Inquest on "the Death of Communism" (II)

I Told You So

By Robert Conquest



MAJOR-GENERAL DUNSTERVILLE commanded a small British force in the Caucasus during the Russian Civil War, and is thus a minor villain in the Soviet mythology of "intervention" (though his troops were never fighting the Bolsheviks). But I quote him in a different context—in his capacity as Kipling's Stalky, triumphantly yelling "I gloat! Hear me gloat!"

Because, yes, when it comes to the truths of Soviet history, I do indeed gloat. This may seem more indecorous in a respectable historian than in a schoolboy. But it is in the public interest that victory over the forces of falsification, ignorance and stupidity be rubbed in as hard as possible.

Over the past thirty years I have published a number of books on the Soviet past and present, and in particular two works covering the crucial period of Stalinism: *The Great Terror* (1968, n.e. 1973, 1990) and *The Harvest of Sorrow* (1986). For a long time they were regarded in the USSR as "anti-Soviet"—and were so listed in secret Customs instructions. And though they were on the whole well received in the West, there were some here who denied it all, or most of it, or who felt it went too far, and who wished to preserve a balance by tempering the wind to the unshorn tiger.

This was no argument about theory or concepts. As Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan pointed out (of another book of mine, *Tyrants and Typewriters* (1989), "the democratic contest with the Marxist-Leninist régimes was a struggle not just over ideas, but also over facts". Sooner or later one or the other view would prove correct, as with the Piltdown Skull.

Over the last two years, the Soviet attitude has been transformed. Soviet publications have justified everything I said, adding much confirmatory detail. Even before this, for some years every Soviet academic or official I met had read at least *The Great Terror*, in English, or in *samizdat*, or in a Russian edition published in Florence. By the end of 1988 the odd favourable public reference to it appeared. In March 1989, *Moscow News* printed a full page interview with me, saying in the preamble that the book had "come by unofficial channels into the Soviet Union and had circulated widely among the intelligentsia, who valued it highly". In April the editor of the politico-literary journal *Neva*, People's Deputy Boris Nikolsky, announced that he meant to publish it as "by far the most serious work of the period" and as a con-

ROBERT CONQUEST *is a poet as well as an historian of Russian affairs. His best known work is "The Great Terror" (1968) which has recently been revised and reissued. He is a Fellow of the Hoover Institution.*

WOLFGANG LEONHARD *has been for 40 years one of the world's leading "Kremlinologists". He taught, until recently, at Yale University and is now Professor of History at Kiel. He has recently published a volume of reflections (after his several returns to the USSR in the 1980s) on the problems of Soviet transition to a post-Communist society.*

LORD CHALFONT *sits as a "cross-bencher" in the House of Lords. He was a Minister in Prime Minister Harold Wilson's Cabinet, and was for many years the military correspondent for "The Times" (London).*

ZBIGNIEW BRZEZINSKI, *a long-time contributor to* ENCOUNTER, *was National Security Adviser to President Carter (1977-81). He is Counsellor at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, and Professor of American Foreign Policy at the Paul Nitze School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University, Washington, D.C.*

JOHN WAIN *is a novelist, critic and academic. He was from 1973-78 the Oxford Professor of Poetry, and still lives in Oxford. Among his biographical works are "Samuel Johnson" (1974), and "The Living World of Shakespeare" (1964). His novels include "Where the Rivers Meet" (1988) and "Young Shoulders" (1982), winner of the Whitbread Prize. He has been a long-time contributor to* ENCOUNTER.

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tribution to "the creation of a legal state and a deepening of democratization".

Over the winter *Neva* indeed published it, in just under a million copies. At the same time, with its even larger circulation, *Novy Mir* published a section of *The Harvest of Sorrow*; several other journals, including the leading history periodical, *Questions of History*, published other parts. I appeared several times on Soviet television, spoke to academic and intellectual audiences, saw the books praised in a variety of periodicals, had interviews printed in five or six others—including, this year, two in *Izvestia*. One started by referring to my "truthful books", while in *Pravda* itself one might read that I had "drawn the picture of our 1920s and 1930s more honestly than we have ourselves . . . ."

It may be thought that I am laying this on thick. But no, I have restrained myself from quoting the warmest encomia. I should add that this welcome and massive vindication was accompanied by the publication in the Soviet Union of a huge amount of new material, which I have used in the new version of *The Great Terror*, just out in London and New York (and soon to be published in Moscow—and Budapest, Warsaw, Belgrade . . .).

Thus, as soon as they had the chance to research and speak, the Russians confirmed such views as mine and, without stopping off on the way for a word with Westerners who had over the years given out untruths, quarter-truths and half-truths, came straight over to our position.

Western Sovietology is indeed meagrely staffed. There are a few institutions like the London School of Slavonic Studies which carry weight. There are individual experts of repute in every aspect of the study. But there are not many of them; and at the same time there are a variety of useless, or sometimes actively harmful professors and others, who have long nourished and propagated delusive ideas about the Soviet Union.

There was recently a new outburst of this sort of thing. Academic journals in the field (few and inadequate as they are) for the most part laid their pages open to a stream of contributions from "revisionists" who in one way or another played down Stalinism and the Terror. Several of us, between more pressing commitments, provided (often heavily cut and edited) answers, deploying facts long known but newly doubted. The revisionist themes were: (*a*) Stalinist collectivisation was a success—one variant particularly applauds the Party plenipotentiaries from the cities, who in fact knew nothing about agriculture and were only strong on propaganda and terror; (*b*) the transformation of Soviet society and government was the main, and generally beneficial, result of the 1930s; and (*c*) the terror, if any, was minor and justifiable. It did not greatly affect the population either physically or psychologically.

Well, all these points were obviously quite untrue from the start, and have now been continuously refuted. But they were propounded by American and other academics who still have tenure in respectable universities. How did all this happen?

First, the remnants of the Western Stalinophile tradition can certainly be traced. But in most cases one seems to find a yen for apparent novelty—an easier way to gain attention than merely developing truth; and this carried with it a continually increasing professional investment in fallacy. Such things are not unknown even in the true sciences.

In fact an ancillary error of these revisionists lay in a scientific, or at least mathematical, field—demography. Experts were found to claim that the fake census of 1939 was genuine. (Even that census shows a population deficit of fourteen or fifteen million, but the real deficit was higher still.) Soviet demographers have now pointed to three reasons for rejecting it. First, as we already knew (and it might have been thought adequate to raise doubts all on its own), the census of 1937 had been suppressed and the then Census Board shot for "diminishing the population of the Soviet Union", which gave the new Board an incentive to deliver unjustifiably high figures. Second, Stalin announced the 1939 results before the new Census Board had finished examining the material. Third, deaths in custody were not recorded (and indeed most of those shot had been sentenced to "ten years without the right of correspondence", and were thus technically still alive).

Though particularly perverse, that was only one of a multifarious set of absurdities. One scholar proved that not everyone was terrified all the time, so that there could not have been much of a terror. Others suggested that the casualties were in the region of a few thousand or tens of thousands—as with David Irving. And all this was printed, as I have said, in the professional journals.

BUT DOES THIS REFLECT the state of American Sovietology as a whole? Yes, up to a point. Few fully agreed with this drivel, but many took it seriously. What it showed above all (if in particularly virulent form) was a major disqualification for studying Stalinism. As Orwell said, to understand that alien order, an effort of the imagination as well as of the intellect is needed. If one cannot feel as well as "know" an historical period, one cannot understand it. The intellects varied, but the imagination was not merely lacking: it was actively discouraged. And this defect pervaded the whole field. It was based on "the political science" notion that pure objectivity is attainable (and don't let us even talk about the new "mathematical" treatment of politics and history). This did not much affect my generation, and the younger scholars are getting over it. But in the stratum in between (as indeed in other spheres in what were once the humanities) a portentous mediocrity has emerged, as when (graduate students complained) a professor of fairly high standing rebukes a project as "judgmental". The result is vast amounts of material on cotton prices and such. Essentials are avoided, insights censured, understanding obscured.

As to the objectivity kick, I will savour in this context another Soviet comment (in *Novy Mir*, no. 10, 1989) on why my methods produced results which turned out to be sound and why (by implication) others didn't:

> "We wish to emphasise a characteristic of his historical style not often found in the works of Western Sovietologists. The analysis of facts produced by R. Conquest is exact and merciless . . . but his account is

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completely free from either positivist indifference or political malice. The enumeration of and confrontation with objective facts is kept clearly distinct from the author's own voice, full of sadness and sympathy for the great misfortunes of, one would have said, a people wholly foreign to him . . . ."

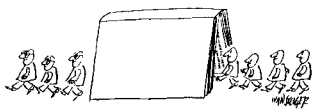
The affectation of dispassionateness does not in fact lead to a higher level of objectivity. As ever, it carries with it the concealment and distortion of inherent prejudice. Such attitudes, or poses, widespread in academe, are among the reasons that truth has had a hard time even apart from the active role of revisionists. Perhaps the lesson has been . . . well, let us say perhaps the lesson *will* be learned. Perhaps.

In Soviet circles, catharsis is the word. A Western colleague was lately consulted by the head of a Department of Scientific Communism in a Soviet university who said he proposed to reform his fief by giving early retirement to ten, firing ten, and retraining the other ten.

Such procedures are unheard of at Piltdown U. But at least it may shake them in their absurdities to hear us gloat, if we do it loudly enough and often enough.

From Moscow to Berlin & Points West

By Wolfgang Leonhard



THE REASONS FOR "getting it wrong" are, in my case, in my autobiography, with personal, geographical and family factors playing the decisive role in shaping a young man's mind and spirit. The reasons for, ultimately, "getting it right" lay in painful and disorienting experiences, coming as I did from wartime Russia to post-War Communist Germany, which led to reflections and revisions, to flight and exile, and to a whole new way of looking at history and politics and the purposes of one's life.

As I write, I am embarrassed by the spectacle of East German Communists (and some of them I knew when I came from Moscow to Berlin in 1945) apparently shedding their illusory ideologies in a matter of weeks, if not days. These are the so-called "*Wendehälse*", those wrynecks who can turn their pointed beaks full-circle in any direction. In my case it was a slow intellectual and emotional process which took some ten years . . . until I turned up in Tito's Yugoslavia, then Oxford, then Yale.

I came from a Communist family. My mother, Susanne Leonhard, was a friend of Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. After the Nazis came to power in 1933 (I was twelve years old at the time), I was sent off to Sweden; and when the *Gestapo* finally caught up with my mother's cell in her illegal opposition group she fled to pick me up and we emigrated to Moscow. (We had a Western choice, but we made the wrong decision—we could have had an English visa and found refuge in Manchester!) Thus, I was educated in the Party schools in the Soviet Union; and one of my classmates was Mischa Wolf, the *Stasi* General, the celebrated and notorious espionage chief of the *DDR* under the Honecker régime (and he is still around, talking as if he were sincerely rich in dissident sacrifices). After a year my mother was on the *GPU* list to be "purged" in the Stalinist "Show Trial" tragedy, and she abruptly disappeared from my life for almost a decade in a Siberian labour camp. My stepfather—my own father was a refugee in Paris—suffered a similar fate; he was my mother's second husband—Bronsky by name, a leading Bolshevik, a friend of Lenin's, and a former Soviet Ambassador in Vienna. My mother was released in the end; but Bronsky was shot in the Siberian prison-camp.

It should have been clear to a normal young man that this was less than an ideal state, nothing like a paradise for workers and peasants. But it wasn't; and this is a lesson in ideological blindness or "selective belief" which I have tried to teach in my subsequent academic career with, I am afraid, small success. We were all in our Karl Liebknecht School a cadre of "true believers". We asked no questions, if the answers (as in Stalin's catechismic style) had not already been given us. Looking back on this nightmare, I calculate (although Robert Conquest may differ with a nought or two) that during the years in which I was "orphaned" (1936-38) there were some seven million persons arrested in the Soviet Union—ten thousand per day, two years long. I find it now scarcely comprehensible, even imaginable. Days and nights of arrests and executions! The fathers and mothers of most of my friends were detained, interrogated, imprisoned. We went to school and could see on the streets the trucks which transported the "bandits" and "counter-revolutionaries". In the classroom our teacher arrived, chalk-white with fear, to attempt to give us instruction.

Memories speak clearly and vividly now, but at that time when I thought of my mother who was to spend nine years in the Vorkuta camp of the *Gulag*, I also thought of my father, on the losing anti-fascist side in the Spanish civil war, and then imprisoned in a Nazi penitentiary. Both my parents were, thus, victims of the two great totalitarian dictatorships. The losses in a young man's soul, perhaps, cancelled each other out, and re-routed emotions into a mindless loyalty to Father Stalin, with the Party as a home, and the international movement an extended family. And so I came with Walter Ulbricht's first group of German Commissars to build at long last the new socialist society in the *Heimat* of Marx and Engels. Even my name was "adapted" to the historic task—I was now "Wolfgang", not Wladimir (as my mother, in the Bolshevik *chic* style of the day, named me . . . after Lenin, and named her daughter Nadeshda, after Lenin's wife). I had remained fanatically single-minded; and my only slip had been on one evening in Moscow when I had lapsed into a flirtation with a pretty Spanish girl, Amaya, the daughter of Comrade Dolores Ibarruri; I was consequently subjected to a successful corrective Party hearing, an ex-

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ercise in Bolshevik self-criticism which lasted seven hours.

I will not go into the further lapses, the series of doubts and unorthodoxies which led me to abandon the Ulbricht régime in 1949 and flee to Belgrade (where I was welcome since I had deviated from the Party line which had condemned Tito's Yugoslavia for its heretical course). It is all recorded in my first book, *Die Revolution entläst ihre Kinder*, which I wrote in 1954, and was translated into English by C. M. Woodhouse a year later as *Child of the Revolution*.[1] The stations of the way are recorded therein—the falling-away of the blinkers which had shut out reality for so many years of my life; the puncturing of adolescent illusions about the idealistic "goodness" of Left-wing causes and crusades; the growing commitment of a chastened ex-Communist, not to a primitive anti-Communism which would indiscriminately hate everything that had to do with my previous beliefs, but to a democratic humanism and, if the phrase be permitted, a sophisticated anti-Communism. The greatest turning-point in this intellectual process occurred at Oxford, where I had been invited by that most informed student of Communist affairs, R. N. Carew-Hunt of St Antony's College.

It had never been the practice of Marxist-Leninists to take seriously what we called "bourgeois books", let alone read them or study them. I devoured a whole library of literature about what became "my subject": the degeneration of the October 1917 revolution; the twisted "Russification" of Marxism; the contradictions in the Socialist economies which necessarily produce poverty, stagnation, bureaucratisation, a police state; the culture of a totalitarian (or, if you will, an absolutist) state which frustrates and practically negates man's natural tendency to learn from failures, reasonably to reassess, openly to criticise, to move from paralysing dogmatism to differentiated debate. And when I had read and

[1] In one of my recent trips to the USSR, the editors of the Soviet weekly *Za Rubeshom* (*Beyond the Frontiers*) told me in Moscow that they had translated my autobiography and would be publishing a chapter a week.

But I was also informed that, free as they were to write anything about Russia, the chapters on the Soviet Zone of post-War Occupied Germany (1945-49) would necessarily be omitted. This was at the time (March 1989) of high tension between Gorbachov's *perestroika* and the hard-line East German régime. Presumably, now that Honecker and his cronies are gone, the missing chapters can be restored.

To be sure, in all the bookshops of the soon-to-be-defunct *DDR*, the West German paperback edition (with a new 1990 preface) now circulates freely. "Bourgeois liberty" is nowadays a "formal" freedom!

Ignazio Silone "Rehabilitated"

Rome

IGNAZIO SILONE, *37 years after his expulsion and 12 years after his death, has now been "rehabilitated" by the Italian Communist Party. The whole Silone affair has been termed "a tragic episode". This was the phrase used by one of the influential spokesmen (Umberto Ranieri) of the Party's young guard in an interview with "Il Centro", a newspaper from the Abruzzi where Silone (born, Secondo Tranquilli) grew up. The movement had deprived itself of a great writer who earlier than others had detected the illiberal and authoritarian character of "real-existing socialism" and had openly spoken and written about it "without renouncing the cause of freedom and a humane socialism."*

Silone had been expelled in 1931 as a dissident who had opposed Stalin's policies. Although he was only 31 he was a top Italian figure in the Communist International where he was insisting, vainly, on a common front of all forces in the struggle against Fascism. Silone had been one of the Party's founders in Livorno in 1921, and his "excommunication" (about which he wrote movingly in his contribution to the Crossman-Koestler "God that Failed" volume) was something of a traumatic experience for him. "My expulsion was for me an extremely sad moment, the deep sadness of the loss of one's youth. . . . And I come from a part of the country where one mourns longer than elsewhere." The Party Chairman, Palmiro Togliatti, called Silone—who had by then published his famous early novels "Fontamara" and "Bread and Wine"—a man who was "an unworthy counterfeiter" and, more ominously, "a case for the clinic".

HOW FAR **does the "rehabilitation" go, even in these palmy days of the end of their ideology? Not very far. In the Muscovite revisionist circles there have been full and direct confessions of "error"; for example, in the case of Nikolai Bukharin. But two years ago on the occasion of a Congress commemoration of the 10th anniversary of Silone's death, the Italian Communists absented themselves. Of course they have good reasons for this stubbornness. To reopen the documents and archives in the Silone expulsion touches on most sensitive elements of the Italian Communist mythology. It would re-open the conflict with Gramsci, another dissident, and raise the question of the guilt of the whole Communist movement which, with its Stalinist theory of "social fascism", made possible the Nazi domination of Germany and, later, Europe. The *CPI* has undergone deeply radical changes in recent times, but there are some matters which are better left untouched. The next elections are coming up, and wasn't all this so long ago?**

THUS, THE CHANGE *of mind about Ignazio Silone—who had once said that "the final struggle" may well be between Communists and ex-Communists—appears to be halting and tentative and uncertain. The Party has not pursued it with their usual procedures for "acquitting" and "restoring honour" to former comrades. Nothing has been heard from the General-Secretary, Achille Occhetto, who is usually responsible for this kind of "absolution". Nevertheless, it is clear that the Party wants to put the past behind it, and make up for the interdictions and excommunications of the Stalinist era. Nowadays, when no one can be "damned", is there any need for rehabilitations?*

As the Director of the Gramsci Institute (Giuseppe Vacca) put it, "We are not a church which has to decide who is permitted to enter paradise and who has heretically sinned. . . ."

SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (*Munich*)

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re-thought enough, I began writing, and tried to make a few contributions of my own to the "Great Debate" into which I had been unwittingly plunged when, by accident, I came across in the blockaded Berlin of 1948 a few pernicious pamphlets by "counter-revolutionaries" (Arthur Koestler, David Dallin and Boris Nicolayevsky, Solomon Schwarz) which it was death to read.

I had got it wrong; but during the last 40 years, in a number of works published in many languages, I think I got it roughly right—and recent events in the USSR and in Eastern Europe have given me a sense of joyous fulfilment. I had always hoped for movement towards liberation, a *grosse Befreiungsbewegung*: and it has come to pass. Some in the West may think the ideal of a pluralistic democracy, with both Left and Right legally contesting for power to make evolutionary social change, rather on the banal and insipid side. It has now proved its historic vitality, with admirable civic passions and a marvellously disciplined (think of the non-violent transitions in Warsaw, Prague, Budapest, Leipzig) peaceableness. In a half-dozen books I had tried to argue how unstable the would-be totalitarian Empire was. Régimes were passed on from Stalin to Brezhnev, from Gottwald to Husak, from Ulbricht to Honecker, from Rakosi to Kadar, from Gomulka to Jaruzelski; but they would not last forever. Sooner or later the hateful old order, inefficient and corrupt, would be swept away, or collapse, or divide into warring factions, or somehow give way to a fate that was not written in the stars but programmed into the very "seeds of destruction" from which such rigorously repressive régimes spring.

There were times when, with my "sophisticated" anti-Communism, I felt almost as isolated as I had been in the East when an unorthodox thought came into my head. Especially in the so-called years of *détente*, when in Germany misguided hopes for *Ostpolitik* raged, such reflections were not welcome. "Sovietologists" were denounced as cold warriors who were endangering the chances of "peace". Pundits in Washington tried to establish the deep "organic roots" which the Soviet satellite system had developed into the "stability" of the various East European lands. Vague and flaccid notions of "Kremlin good will" (how Dr Kissinger did enjoy his outings in the Russian woods with Chairman Brezhnev!) crowded out all sharp analysis of Soviet society, its tensions and contradictions.

WESTERN JOURNALISTS—whose worst traditions lay in *not* seeing what had been clearly there (there was "no starvation" in the '20s, there was "no terror" in the '30s)—now began optimistically to report *new* hopeful realities that clearly (now we see them in all their polluted ugliness) were never there. The East German Communists were "efficient Prussians" and the *DDR* was "a success", not only stable but popular. Gierek was constructing a new Poland and deserved all the millions we could give him. Kadar, enlightened and civilised, was putting Hungary on a practical, functioning basis. Who would listen to a message suggesting that all these were fatuous fictions? That all these "Westernisers" would be "soon"—*How* soon? "Sooner or later"—swept away, and consigned (in that ironically useful phrase of Trotsky's) to the dustbin, the garbage-can of history.

We, the happy argumentative few, insisted on distinguishing between the people and the régime; reiterated the centrality of liberal reforms and human rights; and never lost sight of that fundamental Cold War truth that Western weakness would encourage the hard-line adventurers, that Western strength offered a hope that things might conceivably become different.

And different they did become. I even predicted it in ENCOUNTER, and the reader may be interested to look at the article which the editors were prescient enough to publish in March 1980 under the title "The Soviet Empire in Crisis". We were not prophets, and were not in the business of futurology. Your writers had always looked askance at the myth-makers in the fashion, long influential, of Isaac Deutscher and Edward Hallett Carr. In my own case, since I had for so many years of a misspent youth "got it wrong", I was desperate in a kind of spirit of intellectual compensation and moral restitution to get it truly right. None of us was blessed with special dispensation from the gods of wisdom; there were no blinding illuminations from on high. Nothing serves the truth like a plain, if intense, preoccupation with all the available facts in their variegated contexts. All we did was to pay attention.

Of Marx & Mozart

By Alun Chalfont

EARLIER THIS YEAR I sat in on one of those international conferences (so memorably evoked by Anthony Powell in his novel, *Temporary Kings*), listening to a French intellectual explaining earnestly that it was not Marxism which had failed in the Soviet Union, but the perversion of it by a succession of Russian leaders. Marx, we were sternly instructed, sought "*to give to everyone the economic, political and cultural means to develop fully all the human potential which resides in him, so that every child carrying within him the genius of Mozart might actually become Mozart. . . .*" This, we were assured, was the definition of socialism by its aims—"the socialisation of the instruments of production was only a means. . . ."

The Soviet leaders, it seems, perverted this luminous vision in three ways. They translated Marx's *descriptive* definition of the capitalist theories of growth, as applied in England in the 19th century, into a normative law for the development of Russian socialism in the 20th century. Secondly, they confused socialism with state control (*étatisa-*

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tion), a heresy against which Marx himself had warned. It meant, he said, "that Bismarck would be the greatest socialist in Europe because he first nationalised the post office. . . ." Thirdly, they confused planning, which is simply a set of guidelines (*un rôle d'orientation*) with a system of direction from above. This triple perversion, we were informed more in anger than in sorrow, had led the economy into chaos and freedom into the dungeons.

This homily, delivered with unblinking seriousness, reflects one of the ways in which the apologists now seek to explain away the collapse of so many totalitarian régimes. The reason, of course, is not that Marxism-Leninism has been unequivocally rejected by those who were its victims. It is not, as Imre Mecs said at the reburial ceremony for Imre Nagy, that "We are burying a system which was bad from the outset". No: the reason is that the pure milk of Communism, originally intended to flow in the veins of a hundred thousand Mozarts, became adulterated by an infusion of capitalist fallacies. From here it is only a small, confident step towards the conclusion of the Frenchman at the conference: "*Mais cet incontestable échec, ne doit pas nous conduire à idéaliser le jungle du marché sauvage, et à nous convertir dans l'extase à ce monothéisme du marché. . . .*" That is to say, let us not try the obvious alternative to a system which has disastrously failed; let us, instead, try yet another version of it.

For, this unrepentant Marxist continued, capitalism has provided us with the spectacle of a bestial society characterised by the city of New York which, in 1989, recorded 169,487 crimes against the person, and, among other statistics, 1,905 murders—"that is to say, every five hours, someone is killed". "*Il est difficile de présenter*", he concluded with elaborate irony, "*même à des gens qui sortiraient de l'enfer, un tel paradis.*" When we reflect that, in the Hell to which he so lightly refers, millions died miserably in a programme of relentless genocide, the effrontery is breathtaking.

MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE of the flimsy barrier which separates "useful idiots" from the other sort, platoons of Peace people, intoxicated with the prospect of some kind of social dividend consequent upon the perceived liquidation of the East-West confrontation, are proclaiming triumphantly, much as though they were directly responsible for the entire phenomenon, that we really *are* witnessing not only the failure of Communism, but also the end of the Cold War, not to mention the demise of history itself.

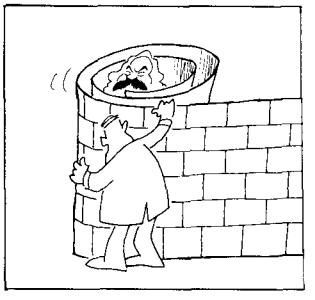
This extrusion of earnest platitudes by the progressive *nomenklatura* prompts the morose reflection that it would indeed be pleasant to be as sure of anything as they seem to be of everything. It may not be entirely inopportune to express some of the uncertainties which now assail those who prefer for the moment to remain at the coal-face, resisting the temptation to throw away our shovels and join the manifestations of unrestrained joy at the pithead.

There is a certain sense in which it is possible to sustain the proposition that Communism has failed. Indeed, this is scarcely an astonishing revelation. The attempt to translate the moral bankruptcy of Marxism-Leninism into a political and economic system has consistently resulted in the misery and despair of the totalitarian nightmare—the denial of individual dignity, the debasement of material living standards, the dark night of terror and oppression.

When this truth is universally recognised and the Communist experiment is consigned to the rubbish heap, it will be a time for profound satisfaction, and even for a measure of restrained celebration—especially, one might hope, by those whose uncritical support has helped it survive for so long. That time has not yet arrived, and anyone who believes that it has, should reflect upon the words of Mr Robin Fox, the author of a recent essay entitled "Marxism's Obit is Premature". According to Mr Fox, Lenin distorted the true meaning of Marxism "as surely as the Christian Church has distorted the words of Christ". The trouble with Communism, he asserts, is like the trouble with Christianity: it has never been tried. The Marxist idea, therefore, is still valid and those "who wish to prevent its realisation had better recognise this fact before they become too complacent about the end of something that never happened. . . ."

So those of us who thought that we were the enemies of Communism—the Hawks, the Cold Warriors, and the much ridiculed pursuers of Reds-under-the-bed—were, of course, wrong all along. The pitiless suppression of human dignity; the aggressive foreign policies and the menacing military

Of Dreams & Clubs



*THE FAMOUS English Marxist historian, Eric J. Hobsbawm, was asked in an interview with an "*Independent*" writer (Paul Barker) in January 1990:*

"Why do you remain after all this [the East European popular revolts against corrupt and repressive régimes] a Communist?"

Professor Hobsbawm replied:

"I think the dream we had is a great dream, whether you call it a Socialist dream or, when I came in to it, the dream of general liberation, the liberation of mankind, the liberation of the poor.

I think the people who devoted their life to this were enormously good people. There is more sheer unselfish devotion and heroism in this movement than in any other. . . ."

Hobsbawm also added,

"I don't like being in the company of the sort of people I've seen leaving the Communist movement and becoming anti-Communist. There are certain clubs of which I would not wish to be a member. . . ."

Evidently the company he prefers is the same club that boasted of such "unselfish devoted heroes" as Stalin, Beria, Brezhnev, Ceausescu, Pol Pot, et al.

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establishments; the disinformation and the "active measures"; the systematic sponsorship of international terrorism—none of these had anything to do with Communism. They are said to be only the product of a Leninist heresy which led inevitably to the Stalinist nightmare.

A disproportionate degree of euphoria is therefore out of order. The collapse of tyranny in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe may not be irreversible. As one Soviet propagandist, Nikolai Sergeevich Portugalov, has recently observed, recent events may have left "the tree of socialism" greener than it was before.

Past Rebuffs, & Present Rejoicing

By Zbigniew Brzezinski

I RECENTLY ATTENDED a session on contemporary developments in the Soviet Union led by a middle-aged Soviet academic. He was visiting the United States, being permanently employed in one of the prestigious research institutes in Moscow and reputed to have close contacts with the top Soviet leaders. As I listened to him, I could not refrain from hearing echoes of the past. My mind wandered back to the early 1950s, when I was at Harvard, working first under and later with Merle Fainsod and Carl J. Friedrich. Both were pioneers in the study of modern totalitarianism, in its Nazi as well as its Soviet varieties.

The Soviet academic spoke as if he had come directly out of one of their seminars. His favourite words were "totalitarianism. . . *delegitimisation*. . . *terror*. . . *ideological* indoctrination. . . bureaucratic stagnation". He used these terms to describe not only the Soviet past but to analyse the Soviet Union's current problems.

It was ironic, I thought, how the wheels of industry had turned. The whole concept of totalitarianism was under great intellectual assault in the West during the 1960s and '70s. One textbook academic after another denounced it. Instead, the contemporary Soviet Union was actually described by scholars as governed in a manner not fundamentally different from the democracies of the West. Later, some specialists even waxed enthusiastic on the reforms introduced by Brezhnev, and went on to describe his system as the epitome of stability and achievement.

That fashionable repudiation of "totalitarianism" as an irrelevant perspective on contemporary Communism led quite naturally to an intellectual romance with notions of "the convergence of Communism" with Western-type systems. Policies designed to promote *détente* were accordingly also seen as the surest way to a very amiable termination of the Cold War. It was essential—according to this line of reasoning—to avoid anything that might irritate Communist leaders, since any such "provocations"—for example, the Human Rights campaign—might delay the natural accommodation of Communism with the progressive evolution of the West.

No wonder, then, that by the 1970s *détente* was already proclaimed as having taken us "beyond the Cold War". When working in the White House, I had to suffer endless expositions by one particularly outspoken NATO leader, acting as self-appointed intermediary between Brezhnev and the US President, who could not restrain his praise for the alleged brilliance, good will, and common sense of that politically corrupt Soviet dictator. (He was similarly enamoured of the now almost forgotten Edward Gierek of Poland, for somewhat the same reason.)

Arguments to the effect that the Soviet Union would not be able to avoid the challenge of Nationalism, that its socio-economic system would become mired in the early phase of the Industrial Revolution and thus be incapable of moving beyond into the technotronic age, and that in fact the Soviet Union was only a one-dimensional global power (in the military area alone, and quite deficient and backwards in all others)—these arguments were rejected as obsessive expressions of "narrow-minded anti-Communism", perhaps derived from one's rather specific ethnic and religious origins. And, Heaven forbid, if one were to advocate firm resistance to Soviet-sponsored aggression in the Third World! Any advocacy of making the Human Rights campaign into a major ideological challenge to the Soviet Union was viewed as a politically irrational attempt to "perpetuate the Cold War".

I remember having lunch one day with a very prominent American, a former Cabinet member in the national security area, who explained to me at length how Lech Walesa and his *Solidarity* were being so very provocative and highly counterproductive. They were interfering, he said, with the peaceful processes of change by their extreme and unwarranted demands. This state of mind was clearly shared by at least one prominent European leader, who reacted to the imposition of martial law in Poland by publicly regretting the fact that General Jaruzelski had been "forced" to take such action.

IT IS NOT SURPRISING therefore, that the collapse of Communism was for so many such a surprise. Even as recently as two-and-a-half years ago, when I argued before the Centre for Policy Studies in London that the next phase in Eastern European revolutions would not involve isolated and sequential outbreaks but in all probability would occur in several states at the same time, producing a new "Spring of Nations", my views were seen—fortunately, by only a few of those present—as an expression of a Cold War mentality. Yet by then the internal erosion of Communist totalitarianism—the irrelevance of its ideological prescriptions for the modern world, and its widespread social alienation—were no longer isolated and hidden phenomena. They

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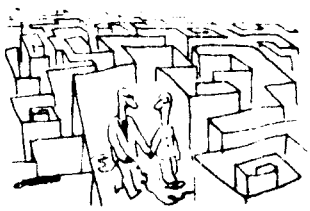
were becoming the dominant inner reality of the Communist systems, a reality which broke out with such manifest force in the course of 1989.

As I listened to my Soviet scholar adopting not only our vocabulary but applying our concepts to the current Soviet reality, I could also not help but reflect on the fact that his views are symbolic of a great and historic triumph. In the concluding decade of the 20th century, we are all witnesses to the final drama in democracy's century-long struggle against the challenge of Nazi and Soviet totalitarianism. Nazism came to an end in the mid-point of that century, and Communism now is in its final agony. It may not be an occasion for gloating, but it surely is a time for rejoicing.

A Toast to a Lonely Voice

By John Wain



HISTORICAL ATMOSPHERE—"period flavour", if you will—gets lost more quickly, and more completely, than anything else. I have reached an age (65) when I am continually coming across biographies of people I knew well in the first half of my life, written by authors too young to remember them or their epoch. In almost every case these books are disappointing, not because they contain factual errors that one could pinpoint, but because they view their subject through a permanent filter of unfamiliarity that produces an all-pervading *atmosphere* of error. What the authors don't know (how could they?) is what this or that specific milieu in England, and doubtless in other countries, *felt* like 40-odd years ago. One couldn't correct their distortions except by writing another book, treating the whole subject afresh.

For these reasons I would expect the historical memory of the days when ENCOUNTER had its beginnings, the early 1950s, to be first blurred and then virtually forgotten very quickly. When it was launched, the grim episode of the Berlin Blockade was only five years in the past; the outbreak of the Korean War, only three. (I have no time for research, but I believe the Korean War actually ended about the time ENCOUNTER began.) Both those episodes were demonstrations of the aggressive and expansionist nature of Communism, its determination to get what it wanted by force if force was the most convenient way. And in neither instance could the West count on the unequivocal support of its intelligentsia.

I remember well that the line taken by the *New Statesman*, for instance, about Korea was that the Yanks ought to be left to get on with their war. In the eyes of most people on the Left, the resistance to the North Korean invasion was not a United Nations action so much as an American strike against a Socialist Eastern power, designed to "make the world safe for big business". We heard a great deal about America and big business in those days, when Western Europeans, busy building up their shattered countries under American military protection, were very holier-than-thou, and the French coined the useful expression "Coca-colonisation". Perhaps the superiority about big business helped everyone to put a good face on having to accept the protection. It doesn't make sense, but it's a familiar enough pattern.

In the late '40s and early 50s, the Leftward pressure on the individual—the ordinarily thoughtful, concerned individual, not the golfing stockbroker—was a mixture of cultural and political. The cultural pressure, which to some extent is and always will be permanent—in the 1960s it was renamed "radical chic"—had its origin in the fact that ever since late Victorian times, to go no further back, Socialism and the Anti-Establishment generally had enjoyed the support of the most talented, most original, most articulate people in the community, or at any rate a majority of them. Once again the *New Statesman*, at the height of its influence from about 1935 to '55, provides the most convenient example. Its political opinions were presided over by Kingsley Martin; its opinions on literature and the arts by a witty, graceful, stylish team who, taken as a whole, represent the last flowering of the Bloomsbury garden, their opinions safely Left and their tastes formed by expensive education, adequate money for theatres, concerts, first editions and foreign travel. "If the front pages of the *New Statesman* had their way", the familiar joke ran, "the back pages would cease to exist." I call it a joke, and in that spirit it was repeated; but those who repeated it, if and when they slowed down long enough to think over the matter, knew that it was the most literal truth.

In this climate, criticising any state whose propaganda described it as Socialist was like spitting on to the tablecloth. One just didn't do it. Like every orthodoxy, the orthodoxy of the Left depended on an instinctive understanding of what was "done" and "not done". In 1937, for example, George Orwell gave great offence by coming back from Catalonia with the eye-witness evidence that some of the most barbarous things being done in Spain were being done not by Fascists to Socialists, but by Socialists to other Socialists. Notably to the Anarcho-Syndicalists of the POUM, who, after fighting bravely throughout a hard winter in the line, found themselves being arrested on their return and thrown into filthy prisons where they often died of neglected wounds and infections. After a brief, appalled silence, Orwell was left in no doubt that he had spat on the tablecloth. It was called "splitting the Left". Apparently throwing brave men into prison isn't splitting the Left—but saying that you have seen them do it, is.

To mention Orwell is appropriate here because though he didn't live to see ENCOUNTER his later years were passed in exactly that atmosphere, and one of the quickest ways to recapture it is to look through his collected journalism and

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watch him taking on the likes of Harold Laski and Konni Zilliacus. But, of course, one of Orwell's strengths was that he didn't mind being unpopular. Or, to put it a little more accurately, being a man reasonably well-disposed towards his fellow-beings he didn't actually *like* being unpopular, didn't have any of that nonsense about *le plaisir aristocratique de déplaire*, but was prepared to put up with it rather than not speak up for his beliefs.

STILL THE PRESSURE towards the Left, and not merely owards Socialism (which after all often wears a sympathetic human face and represents genuine humanity and generosity) but towards the most naked forms of oppression enforced by deceit and terror, went far beyond mere unpopularity. Underlying the cajolery and the snobbery was a raw threat. Bow down while you still have the choice! When we bestride your prostrate form it will be too late for any show of submission! The message was repeated in many forms, but it was always the same.

All through the decades when the build-up of Soviet military strength went on at a colossal level, when the Warsaw Pact forces were trained and ready with equipment standardised right across their range and the nuclear arsenal was targeted on the whole of Western Europe, there were many times when it seemed all too fearfully plausible that in the world revolutionary struggle the Communist powers would in fact be the winners: times when the West seemed rotted with hedonism and indecision, its culture drugged with *kitsch* and commercialism, the whole structure ready to blow over at a puff of wind. At those times one had to admit to oneself that the writers and intellectuals who hedged their bets looked like the clever ones. The smart thing to do, surely, was to proclaim the superiority of the Communist system as loudly as one could, while living among the comforts and privileges of the liberal democracies. After all, there were no penalties attached to such *trahison des clercs*, otherwise known as biting-the-hand-that-fed-you while getting ready to sell out like Quisling.

At this point I hear in my head a note of caution: sounding not for the reader, but for me. It is usually a mistake to impute bad motives to one's opponents in a controversy. Honest differences of opinion can exist. Were all Western cheer-leaders for Communism motivated simply by calculation of the odds and belly-selfishness? No. Some were honest dolts. Many were imperfectly educated; they lacked adequate information. (Here, ENCOUNTER was in a position to help them.) Others, of an older generation, had fixed their attitudes in a epoch when Communism was a mystical faith among many of the young, and a mystical faith can seldom be got rid of. One must have charity.

But cheer-leaders apart, what about the enormous number of those who, with a high profile in other respects, resolutely kept silence on this issue? And here, I think, a more definite, and harder, judgment is in order. For surely it was timidity that kept them silent. They could see what was happening, but they were unwilling to make powerful and implacable enemies. We can leave it at that. No need for recriminations: only for clear thinking.

Acquiescence or at least silence, as I say, looked like the smart thing to do, as well as the chic thing, the fashionable thing, the "in" thing. Those of us who, either from some grain of stubbornness, or perhaps a bedrock perception that it wasn't, in the end, "better to be Red than dead", didn't do it, have ENCOUNTER to thank. ENCOUNTER gave us a rallying-point, a platform, a voice, a sense that there were others like us; and now all the cell doors have come off their hinges and we find that just about everybody was like us all along. There are many problems to come: no doubt some chaos, no doubt much suffering. But before we plunge into the task of confronting them, a word of thanks is in order—so thanks, ENCOUNTER.

Southern Sonnet 1

Sugah, why don you go out an git yo-self *drunk*
Sometime? which is what my Aunt Margie used to drawl
When Freddie was so wound up tight he'd like to plunk
Down and die; there is in you, too, that pride to wawl
In glorious silence, a Delphic oracle
Or a barefoot child of the orphan persuasion
Who finds bread and wine, turning allegorical
A fall-through-the-rotten-wood-of-the-porch occasion;
Though, no, I'm not mocking you, I love you too much,
Drunk past wine, past love, past the poetry fashion
All, all, smally vapid next to one calm clear touch
From the lips of your mind: for this, too, is passion.
So go on, wind yourself up till Time is money;
You know the road home when no one calls you Honey.

Lisa Forestier

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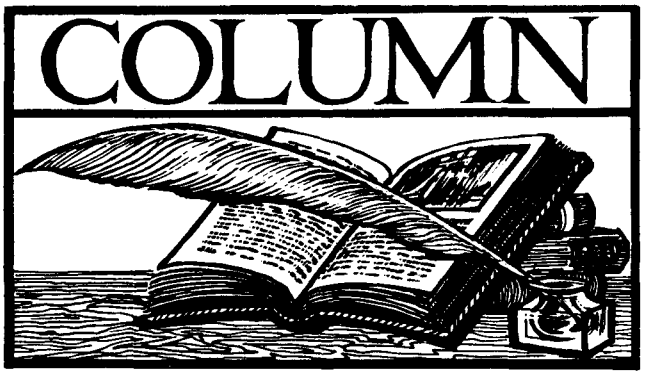

LET'S BEGIN WITH A PUZZLE. What do the following have in common? Addison, Gladstone, Oliver Wendell Holmes. Stumped? Try some more names. Carlyle, Thomas Hughes, Walter Scott. Bravo: the link is writing. And in what genre? Blake, Calverley, Chesterton, Dryden, Laurence Housman, Milton, Spenser, Tennyson, William Wordsworth. Easy—poetry. Yes: but again, what kind? More clues: Bunyan, Cowper, Donne, Herbert, Herrick, Christina Rossetti, John Greenleaf Whittier. Ah—religious verse. Getting warmer. Add Isaac Watts and Charles Wesley, and the answer's obvious. All these people, including Gladstone, wrote hymns.

Not many of them, it's true, are in the Standard 1916 Edition of *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. To be precise, only nine: Addison, Cowper, Hughes, Rossetti, Scott, Tennyson, Watts, Wesley, and William Wordsworth. But that collection has always been rather staid. Its first edition appeared in 1861, in what might be called the "speculative building" period of English hymnody, when new hymnals were pouring from the presses at the rate of one or more every year. And if red-brick Gothic revival was a dim phase in architectural history, that same period was a bad time for verse.

"Gladsome"—"beauteous"—"portal"—"nigh"—"ere"—"for ay"—"oft"—"ope": language like that must have put many people off organised religion, to say nothing of specialist terms like "dayspring", "triune", or "paraclete". Then there were the famous ambiguities: "the child she bare", "without a city wall", "Come, my soul, thy suit prepare". Shackled to scansion like metrical galley-slaves, hymn-writers in those days were quite unscrupulous in distorting the language. Poetic inversion ("did the guiding star behold"); fustian archaism ("'tis", "'twixt", "spake", "haled"); intrusive auxiliary verbs ("did meet"); endless apostrophes ("whene'er", "Heav'n", "o'er", "e'en", "th'uplifted", "bless'd"; and accented word-endings ("piercèd", "cleansèd")—the verbal contortions matched a *Variety* headline or a Tin Pan Alley lyric like *The Old Lamp-lighter*, who made the night a little brighter wherever he did go.

Just as tiresome were the relentless ready-made rhymes. "June/moon/croon/swoon" rhyming in popular songs has nothing to fear in this company, where the Holy Ghost is always attended by th'angelic Host, love goes with above, save with grave, light with night, and adore with evermore. The patness of the rhymes, in many cases, matches the triteness of the tunes.

But not always. Hymns, after all, are also songs to be sung, not only poems to be pored over; and some of the most memorable in the *Ancient and Modern* collection are remembered as much for their tunes as for their words. Would H. F. Lyte's "Abide with me" have become a football anthem without W. H. Monk's stately music? Would Bishop Phillips Brooks's "O little town of Bethlehem" have been so popular a Christmas carol without "Forest Green", its traditional English melody? John Bunyan's "Pilgrim", however much its words have been altered, gains immensely from its "Monks Gate" setting; and Blake's "Jerusalem" is surely inseparable, now, from Hubert Parry's stirring and ingenious tune.

A good tune, in fact, can do wonders for a defective lyric. The 18th-century "St Anne", although it sounds rather pleased with itself, effectively papers over a bum rhyme in Isaac Watts's "O God our help in ages past"—

Our hope for years to come,
Our shelter from the stormy blast,
And our eternal. . . (hum?)

H.J. Gauntlett's "Irby", I'm sure, is what makes Mrs C. F. Alexander's "Once in Royal David's City" so magical as the opening of the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols each year at King's College, Cambridge. It helps to disguise the hackneyed rhyming of "mother mild" with "little child", the nannying precept "Christian children all must be / Mild, obedient, good as He", the equivocal "And He leads His children on", and the last-verse let-down:

When like stars His children crown'd
All in white shall stand around.

Some hymn tunes, on the other hand, simply emphasise the highly secular feel of the words. "Onward, Christian Soldiers" is a case in point. With different words, it could be simply a cheerful Army marching song, crashing its way through all opposition:

Onward, trusty soldiers,
Marching on to war,
With a recce detail
Going on before. . . .

Sabine Baring-Gould's real words were written before World War I, when it was still possible to see war as a dashing adventure, a fit metaphor for spiritual effort. I suppose such sentiments—comradeship, determination, optimism—may help some people in the battle against temptation, pumping adrenalin into works of faith and kindness that might otherwise exhaust them. But after the Somme, the Holocaust, and Hiroshima, it's surely harder to harness military virtues to religious and moral ends. Is there much response, now, to lines like these?

The call to arms is sounding,
The foemen muster strong. . . .

Get thee, watchman, to the rampart!
Gird thee, warrior, with thy sword! . . .

Fierce may be the conflict,
Strong may be the foe,
But the King's own army

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None can overthrow. . . .
Chosen to be soldiers
In an alien land,
Chosen, call'd and faithful,
For our Captain's band.

Mrs Hernaman, Samuel Stone, and Frances R. Havergal, the respective authors of these warlike hymns, were hardly major poets: but even William Blake's "Jerusalem" has incongruous belligerence:

Nor shall my sword sleep in my hand
Till we have built Jerusalem. . . .

Agreed, this is a metaphor for "mental fight" against what Elizabeth Wordsworth called in another hymn "the hosts of ill / Within us and around us": but a bow, arrows, a spear, a chariot, and a sword still seem poor substitutes for a hod, a trowel, and a plumb-line if building is what we're about.

Traditional hymns also show their age in their deference. To judge from the endless exhortations to praise, laud, and magnify the name of the Almighty, His worshippers seem to think they're dealing with an insecure and capricious Oriental despot who needs placating with camel-loads of obsequious flattery. Reverence, admittedly, is the only proper stance for mortal creatures on one small planet in a dizzying galaxy: but the way it's expressed in Victorian and even later hymns is a reminder that the British were and are subjects of the Crown. They seem to carry over a sense of palace ceremonial into their transcendental worship. Are Americans, I wonder, tempted to see the Supreme Being as a celestial Mr President? If so, even a heavenly White House would surely not have quite so many rows of sycophantically warbling courtiers.

FINALLY, of course, the cosmology of many hymns is laughably dated. Heaven is usually in the sky, aloft, somewhere "above", even when seen from Australia; and for Joseph Addison—to take an extreme example—Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo seem to have been hazy figures:

. . . in solemn silence all
Move round the dark terrestrial ball.

Yet Addison's hymn, "The spacious firmament on high", remains an eloquent poem, expressing rational wonder at "the blue ethereal sky", the "spangled heav'ns", "the unwearied sun"—all, as many have felt before and since, phenomena that both dwarf and ennoble our petty lives, if we too are "the works of an almighty hand".

Hymns Ancient and Modern, despite its age, contains many fine specimens, often translations from classical or medieval sources. J. M. Neale, Catherine Winkworth, and a number of others less well known produced fluent and metrical versions of centuries-old hymns, usually in the prevailing Victorian mode, but honest and workmanlike—good reproduction furniture. Side by side with these are more personal and moving original hymns: Isaac Watts's "When I survey the wondrous Cross". Walter Scott's "That day of wrath, that dreadful day" with its image of doom:

When, shrivelling like a parchèd scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll.

Nahum Tate's and Nicholas Brady's "As pants the hart for cooling streams". Horatius Bonar's "I was a wandering sheep", deceptively simple and direct:

They spoke in tender love,
They raised my drooping head,
They gently closed my bleeding wounds,
My fainting soul they fed.

W. St. Hill Bourne's children's hymn "Christ, Who once amongst us" and his harvest anthem "The sower went forth sowing"—both successful extended pastoral metaphors, as is Joseph Anstice's "Lord of the harvest", with its sense of the secret life within "The bare dead grain, in autumn sown". Richard Baxter's "Lord, it belongs not to my care". Mrs Alexander's gentle elegy "Within the churchyard, side by side, / Are many long low graves". Wordsworth's "Up to the throne of God is borne", with its "And he accepts the punctual hymn". Tennyson's "Crossing the bar". The 15th-century "God be in my head". Christina Rossetti's highly disturbing "What are these that glow from afar?"

Strangely, Rossetti's still more familiar—and more vividly focused—"In the bleak mid-winter" was omitted from the 1916 *Hymns Ancient and Modern*. But, like many other good poems, it had been included in *The English Hymnal*. This, originally intended as a supplement to *Hymns Ancient and Modern*, was first produced in 1906, mainly by Percy Dearmer and Ralph Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams, roped in to provide more interesting music, was puzzled by some of the language he encountered. "When he came across 'dear Lord Jesus bring us thistles' in a proof", his widow reported, "he thought it could easily be correct, and did not realize that 'thistles' was anything so humdrum as a misprint for 'thither'." Broadly, however, the aim of *The English Hymnal* was to introduce better writing into the genre. Broadly, it succeeded.

WORTHWHILE innovations included another Addison hymn, "When, rising from the bed of death"; Laurence Housman's "The Maker of the sun and moon"; Edmund Sears's "It came upon the midnight clear"; George Herbert's "The God of love my shepherd is"; Phineas Fletcher's "Drop, drop, slow tears"; Whittier's "All things are thine; no gift have we"; Spenser's "Most glorious Lord of life, that on this day"; Tom Moore's "Thou art, O God, the life and light"; Herrick's "In the hour of my distress"; John Donne's "Wilt thou forgive that sin, by man begun?"; and another fine George Herbert poem, "Teach me, my God and King".

Not all the new harvest lived up to these heights. G. K. Chesterton's contribution, "O God of earth and altar", contained the telling line "But take away our pride"—yet its bombastic tone suggested that the prayer had gone unanswered. Charles Kingsley's "From thee all skill and

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science flow" was marred, for a modern ear, by two words in its last verse:

> *When ever blue the sky shall gleam,*
> *And ever green the sod,*
> *And man's rude work deface no more*
> *The Paradise of God.*

Less frivolous criticism was levelled at some of the dross that crept into so large a collection—744 hymns all told—and at an allegedly Anglo-Catholic bias in the enterprise as a whole.

The result, in 1925, was the third major British hymn collection, *Songs of Praise*—largely produced, once again, by Dearmer and Vaughan Williams, but with the help of Martin Shaw. This introduced further "real poets" who had been omitted from *Hymns Ancient and Modern* and from *The English Hymnal*: Matthew Arnold, Anne and Emily Brontë, Sir Thomas Browne, Robert Browning, Thomas Campion, Arthur Hugh Clough, Coleridge, Eleanor Farjeon, Edmund Gosse, Thomas Hardy, John Masefield, Alexander Pope, Shakespeare, James Stephens, Swinburne, Thomas Traherne, Henry Vaughan, and Walt Whitman.

Again, a few of the newcomers let the side down. The compilers had a softer spot than I have for, say, Jan Struther; nor is Sir Henry Newbolt nowadays a name to conjure with, unless in the Magic Circle, hoping to produce a poet out of an empty hat. But how splendid to have cast the net so wide—and what treasures it rescued. Sir Philip Sidney's and Lady Pembroke's "O Lord in me there lieth nought"; Sir Henry Wotton's "How happy is he born and taught"; Thomas Heywood's "I sought thee round about, O thou my God"; Christopher Smart's "All the scenes of nature quicken", with its cowslips, cardamine, cornflowers, mallow, blackbird, goldfinch, and thistles—this time the genuine article.

Particularity makes poetry: hosannas make bad hymns. Is that a fair assessment? Yes, if hymns are to be scrutinised as words on the page as well as a chorus in the nave or the chancel.

When the King James Bible was republished as *The Bible Designed to be Read as Literature*, there was mild tut-tutting in church circles. Scripture, it was argued, was more important than art. The outcome of this reasoning we now have to live with: a new, more accurate but far less resonant translation of the Bible, and an "Alternative Service Book"—in many places now the only alternative—whose compilers must have had tin ears. Generations are now growing up deprived of much key language; and the new linguistic image-breakers are producing hymnals too.

Is it too late to plead that Keats's sacred trio of truth, beauty, and goodness are a trio in liturgy too? That reverence and worship, mystery and faith, awe and intimations of more than we can know—all that Quakers seek in their sacred silence—need art if they are to enter language? That scholarship in translation and populism in expression can form a deadly alliance against imaginative truth?

Perhaps it's not too late to save hymns. What we need now, I suggest, is a *Hymnal Designed to be Read as Poetry*. If any publisher's interested, I'd be delighted to try.

M

On the edge

Hogan, a footman, pulled her out of the early morning
water, the park being generally deserted, and himself
jilted the night before having thought of ending it all
in the same way, but reprieved. She floated towards him

unseasonable as a flowering lily in the December frost
which made the lake sparkle, her skirts spread wide,
their drenched fabric forming a rondel about her head.
He knew her for a respectable lady, her hands neatly

manicured and an expensive ring on her marriage finger;
it shone still. Then he saw under her heart the bunched
tumulus, put his hand hopelessly on the drowned satin.
He called out and the lake froze as they drew her away.

John Gohorry

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Chris Mann

The Farmyard in the City

Seeing its mint-white railings, its apple-red stables and barn,
the plump-cheeked pumpkins warm to the pips on a split-pole shed,
and chuffing past varnished milk-churns, a pea-green mini-tractor,
you'd think a farmyard in a city, with glass-cased shops next door,
was much too quaint, too artificial a landscape to merit a queue.
Well, adults might think they know all about farmyards,
but children, darting round a turnstile, don't share that view.

Floating them off to sleep, from bedrooms tucked among city trees,
with a duck-pond, or cow-jumped moon, still glowing dimly on a wall,
your stories and songs, of Jemima Puddleduck in bonnet and shawl,
of Noah's deck-top poultry, or old MacDonald's musical pigs and sheep,
have eased them over a farmyard's gate, some time before you arrive.
A farmyard in a city, for those who've yet to go there,
is something like the dream-scape of a bedtime story come alive.

Tugged up to fences by firm little hands, you're helped to discover
how grey-white ducks have feet like a frogman's ribbed flippers,
that goats have teeth as big as clothes-pegs, and bulbous yellow eyes
with slits in like tiny, coal-black hourglasses tipped on their side,
which images loosen a mindset, leaving its story-book patterns behind.
Stale or cynical though you might be, children have a way
of filtering new insights and feelings through an adult's mind.

Bobbing blue and orange balloons on strings, the hip-high explorers,
like nodes of porous energy, rush back and forth in whirling hubbubs,
are threatened, hugged, stuck on toilet-seats or sky-swizzling swings
clutch the neck of sweating ponies, poke sticks at rabbits and hens,
have noses wiped, squabbles shushed, their plaits done up, and laces.
You could say, of course, it was bedlam in miniature as usual,
except for the mystified look on some of the adults' faces.

And once you've all tumbled, down ticklingly prickling bales of hay,
have chewed pink sugar-clouds on sticks, pulled at soft-serve udders
and held the nervy litheness, the small-boned innocence of a lamb,
there'll be some talk, back in the traffic, as seat-belts click on,
of keeping that farmyard somehow alive, beyond that tingled hour.
Look, no one wants to make too much of a fuss about it,
but farmyards in cities do have a certain nourishing power.

There's that other farmyard, of course, the one you've always known,
with phosphates, wheat, rats and clapped-out tractors in grey barns,
where milk's sucked into tractors and old MacDonald computes his tax,
where lambs are marketed and stains hosed off the piggery's hooks.
Well, there's no wishing the hardness of the world away,
but then there're also stories and songs, and farmyards in cities,
when children release in adults the balancing freshness of play.

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Kites

The kites I've flown have all been brightly coloured,
red and blue ones mostly, dangling a string of bow-ties.
Somehow it doesn't make sense to fly a drab kite.
I mean there's no one controlling the colour of kites
but who'd dream of grey or black ones sailing the sky?
There must be more to kites than meets the eye.

You need a big clear piece of breeze to launch them in,
friends and children, to make the whole business worth while,
a dog, chewing the struts, to heighten the excitement,
and squeezing your arm, a spouse to murmur kind words
when suddenly the creature dives irretrievably into a pine.
A man who never crashed a kite is no friend of mine.

Getting ready to fly them's the trickiest part about kites.
I don't mean the minor, domestic odyssey of setting a time,
dragging the unbelievers from TV and going back for the string.
That's nothing, that's different from the other, inner journey.
You won't go looking for kites in the old garden shed
if your heart's in flames or at sixes and sevens with your head.

Not that flying a kite is a turning away from the world!
If balance, if being always in reach of an inner balance
keeps your crusades and ambitions from driving you crackers,
scraps of red and blue, swooping up in a swirling breeze
help to tug such fevers back towards a cooler sanity.
Kites, after all, fly within a framework of gravity.

The way I'm going on about them, you'd think that kites
are really prayers and visions rigged out with string.
Well, I don't know, but playing a kite on a windy hilltop,
watching it dance out clear of your hand and the trees
you'd probably find some truth in that, the way kites fly.
As I said, there's more to kites than meets the eye.

John Holloway

Death of the Kestrel

The breakfasting housemouse, awake
long before people, squealed
his death-scream, seeing the whole sky
blackened with just two wings as the hawk
crashed on the window.

Mouse could not understand
thunderclap without flash. Sky
suddenly blue; and the carpet-
crumbs still his for the asking. Nor
did hawk understand—who
would, with a boneless neck, and needle
eyes thundered to nothing? It lay
across the fallen beech-leaves, russet
back a bigger leaf, blue head
peering, it seemed, further than ever before,

as what does not, at that flash of the final
window—you may see flames, the ecstatic
choirs, dust, the Wheel. . . or black space,
but everyone also can see, reflected,
a hungry terrified mouse.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Writers & Comparisons

Salman Rushdie & Shiva Naipaul—By GEOFFREY WHEATCROFT

IN THE 1960s, two young men settled in England. They were of much the same age; they came from comparable backgrounds; they both had the ambition to write. Become writers they both did, acclaimed and prize-winning novelists. Salman Rushdie has discovered not only acclaim but fame, to a degree and for reasons he could never have wished. He is now, I dare say, the best-known rather than the best-read novelist of the century, a curious and frightening example of extraneous literary celebrity. Although there is no danger that the name of Shiva Naipaul will be forgotten as long as people read (however long that is), he is less than an internationally famous name, which is a pity. The two make an interesting contrast, and it is worth looking at their two careers and comparing what they said with a view to redressing this balance.

Shiva Naipaul was born in 1945, Rushdie in 1947. They were both Indians, or at least could once have been called by the name. Naipaul understandably hated the word "Asian" as it is used in this country nowadays, but that use only caught on after the partition of India and the Mountbatten massacres. Before then, anyone who lived in the old Raj was an Indian, including Muslim Indians like Salman Rushdie's family. He comes originally from Bombay, a cosmopolitan, polyglot, and multi-sectarian city. The family moved to Pakistan and then to England where Rushdie went (like Rupert Brooke, with whom he might not seem to have much else in common) to Rugby and to King's College, Cambridge. After university, he came to London, the advertising business, an English wife, and novel-writing. He published a first novel in 1975, then in 1981 *Midnight's Children*, which won the Booker and the James Tait Black Prizes and brought him local and literary fame rather than international notoriety. His third novel, *Shame*, was published in 1983.

Shiva Naipaul was Indian by descent, from the odd, isolated community whose forebears had emigrated from central India to the West Indies as indentured labourers in the 19th century—part of "the desperate litany of place bred by our Indian diaspora", as he put it. He was acutely aware of the tensions which this diaspora produced, from Kenya and Natal to Guyana and to Trinidad where he was born and grew up. His father was a journalist, his elder brother (by eleven years) became the famous novelist V. S. Naipaul. It was an initial problem for Shiva, to make his career in Vidia's shadow, but one which he got over. After his father's death and his brother's departure for England, Shiva lived with his mother and five sisters. In consequence, he said, he liked the company of women and was "responsive to the tidal motions of their moods—their curious gaieties and darknesses". Women were to play a central part in his fiction, which is much more unusual for a male novelist then one might think.

From school in Port-of-Spain he won a scholarship to Oxford and went up to University College in 1964. He read politics and psychology before switching capriciously to Chinese (and, like many of the best of writers, getting a Third). At Oxford he was a striking figure, in long black boots and long black hair. He acquired a taste for whisky and cigarettes and women; one of my favourite phrases from his occasional autobiographical pieces mentions "sordid sexual encounters with women whose faces I cannot now remember". The taste for smoking and drinking was sometimes to complicate his life. He wasn't a "practising" Hindu, but someone sentimentally attached to his heritage. He did not eat beef, or pork either, since "in Trinidad Hindu and Islam were mixed up". On a visit once to Morocco during Ramadan he was nearly offered violence for lighting a cigarette and ordering a glass of whisky, since "it was my misfortune to look as though I should have been a Muslim".

AT OXFORD he had met his wife, Jenny Stuart. They moved to London and settled in a pokey flat near Little Venice while Shiva wrote his first novel, *Fireflies*. It was published in 1970 when Shiva was only 25, and won the John Llewellyn Rhys Prize. In 1973, the year their only child was born (a son, Tarun), he published a second novel, *The Chip-Chip Gatherers*. The third waited ten years more and was strikingly different in tone. The first two look misleadingly like

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comic novels. That is, they are extremely funny, for Shiva had a mordant sense of humour as well as a crystal ear for dialogue. Unlike them, both set in Indian Trinidad, *A Hot Country* is set somewhere in the Tropics, but nowhere in particular. It is even bleaker in tone than the early novels, whose comedy conceals a heart of darkness.

I don't know whether the two writers ever met, though I think not. If they had, the outcome might have been interesting. Both of them were combative, not to say querulous, not to say cantankerous. Salman Rushdie's manners were the subject of many a disobliging profile before disaster descended on him: his rudeness to friends as well as enemies, his storming out angrily from literary dinners when he thought he hadn't been treated seriously enough.

Like him, Shiva was argumentative, touchy, thin-skinned—where he was himself concerned, that is; he could be a little thick-skinned with others—and hypersensitive, detecting atmospheres and undercurrents where others missed them, which is not to say that they did not exist. He was bear-like to look at, stooping, shambling, staring myopically about him as he came into the pub and shouted one's name. Bear-like in manner also, he was sardonic and rumbustious in conversation, never turning away wrath with a soft answer, never suffering fools gladly—nor, sometimes, people who were far from fools. The editor of a well-known literary magazine slightly cut a piece of his without asking. I can still hear Shiva's voice saying: "To *kill* such a man would not be murder."

Like Salman Rushdie, then, Shiva was "difficult" and sometimes truculent. Like him, he was a novelist (and, incidentally, a better one). But it is not their literary merits precisely which make the comparison between them so fascinating. They both wrote about the lands of their birth in their fiction. They both also wrote descriptive or polemical journalism. And they both, inevitably rather than through choice, touched on the same vitally important subjects: the clash of cultures in our time, Them and Us, the Third World against the rest. What they made of these subjects was very different.

Apart from his novels, Shiva Naipaul wrote two full-length books of reportage. *North of South* was an acid account of a journey in the mid-1970s through three independent African countries: Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. *Black and White* described the background to the mass suicide in a jungle clearing in Guyana by the deluded followers of the American heresiarch Jim Jones. Other pieces from the Tropics are collected in his books *Beyond the Dragon's Mouth* and *An Unfinished Journey*.

What either writer had to say in his non-fiction made him enemies. In Rushdie's case there was a certain amount of unseemly crowing over his predicament last year: one or two columnists seemed to be almost pleased that this cocky, chippy babu had got his come-uppance. It was unseemly but understandable. Rushdie's plight was truly ironical. For years he had been fulminating against his adoptive country. "Britain is not South Africa, I am reliably informed. Nor is it Nazi Germany. I have that on the best authority as well", he wrote in 1982 with the not so much heavy as leaden irony that is one of his hallmarks. "British thought and British society have never been cleansed of the Augean filth of imperialism. It is still there, breeding lice and vermin." (Hyperbole is another of his stocks-in-trade.) The black or brown people of England were terrorised, "afraid to go out after dark", while of course "the police offer threats instead of protection". Being brown himself, Salman Rushdie implied, gave him an advantage denied even to those home-grown progressives who are the most scrupulously sympathetic towards the former colonial peoples. It is not too much to say that he had made a career out of his own Third Worldiness.

Came spring 1989 and it was the racist English police who stood between him and murder at the hand of fanatics who themselves claimed to represent the oppressed masses. The arrow aimed at his heart (in one Persian would-be assassin's phrase) came itself from "the Third World". There is a truly terrible irony in reading Salman Rushdie's essay "Outside the Whale", written in 1984—an appeal to writers for political commitment on the right (which is the Left) side. "We may not approve of Khomeini's Iran", he wrote six years ago. "But the revolution there was a genuine mass movement. So is the revolution in Nicaragua." If so, in either case, so what? So was National Socialism.

The final irony was that Salman Rushdie demonstrated in the form of his novel *The Satanic Verses* just how rootless and *évolué* he was. Since I had first heard of him, I had taken him to be just another middle-class British literary intellectual who did not happen to share one's own pinkish blotchy complexion. He claimed to be one of Them rather than Us, a Third-Worldly victim. Which of us was right?

In *The Satanic Verses* there are two characters called Mrs Torture and Mahound. Among Mr Rushdie's friends in London, calling the Prime Minister "Torture" seemed admirably amusing. Anyone who raised an eyebrow could expect to be asked what was the matter—can't you take a joke? So completely cut off from his roots was Rushdie that he thought "Mahound" was amusing in just the same way. He had quite forgotten that in Qum and Islamabad there are people who can't take a joke at all.

Shiva Naipaul made less of his roots but was closer to them. Perhaps it is for that reason that his view of the world—and especially its Third part—was saner and more honest than Salman Rushdie's. He had, and did not disguise the fact, mixed feelings about his heritage. He was fond of his family and "his people" in a broader sense, but needed to escape from their embrace. Whenever he revisited Trinidad it was with an apprehension that "having arrived here, I may never be able to get out again".

When *North of South* was published, some were perplexed by its sour tone. Surely writers who came from the Third World weren't supposed to write about it like that? For others of us the book was all the more refreshing, though depressing. If it was startling, that was because we weren't used to being told the truth about Africa. The convention was that if you were fond of Africa and wished its people well you had to dissemble about it, as Shiva conspicuously did not.

He had precisely the advantage of being, in another

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absurd expression, non-European: he did not suffer from white liberal hang-ups about "post-colonial guilt". It has been suggested that both he and his brother were actually hostile to black people, using a wider stage as well as their literary skill to settle the score with those who taunted the "coolies" outside the Port-of-Spain rum-shops. There was enough of a grain of truth in this for Shiva to address the question and acknowledge the existence of "the kind of atavism which turns young men"—of Indian descent, that is—"into 'pundits' and 'Negro-haters'".

But which is worse—excessive honesty, inspired by whatever motives; or the dishonesty of those who pretend that everything in the Third World garden is lovely (or that, if it isn't, then it is all still the fault of the West)? Shiva Naipaul's courting unpopularity when he visited Africa, or for that matter his ancestral India ("Sometimes we Hindus have to weep"), or Salman Rushdie's ceaseless playing to the Left-wing gallery?

Shiva, of course, disliked racism in all its forms. He had been taken aback when he first came to London to find ads in newsagents' windows saying "Kolored pipple need not apply"—and to realise that this meant him. And yet for all his prickliness he was not embittered. He saw that to be "anti-racist" was not enough. A further degree of honesty was required: about Africa; about someone like Jim Jones, whose radical-chic supporters in California might have guessed that he was a crook and a charlatan before he turned out to be a murderer; about the concept of the Third World itself.

One of his best essays was on "Flight into Blackness" as an excuse and a cop-out.

> "What should I, in the light (perhaps I should say darkness) of this debased coding, make of myself? I am, after all, a man of 'full-blooded' Indian ancestry. Should I therefore put on a dhoti? Should I take myself up to a cave in the foothills of the Himalayas and surrender myself to the contemplation of the transmigration of souls?"

As for "the promiscuous idea of a Third World", it "does not stand up to close examination. Rather like Count Dracula confronted by the Cross, it crumbles away." The concept of a Third World was dangerous and misleading. It was also patronising. To lump together "say, Ethiopia, India and Brazil under the one banner of Third Worldhood is as absurd and as denigrating as the old assertion that all Chinese look alike. People only look alike when you can't be bothered to look at them too closely."

In 1984, after the usual bibulous farewells in pubs and restaurants, Shiva went to Australia to write a book about the country. He returned with tales of social disaster: he hadn't known, he disingenuously claimed, that one did not say to progressive Australian anthropologists that the aborigines didn't seem to have created a culture as evolved as those of Europe, China or India—still less add, "You're the sort of people who want to keep primitive peoples primitive".

He returned to London, and his fortieth birthday party in February 1985. He got to work on his new book but would ring me up when he had "cabin fever" and needed a break. (He was a perfectionist of an extreme kind, who could spend a morning working on one sentence and then discard it in the afternoon.) One morning in late July he rang to ask if I could come to lunch, and I couldn't. A few evenings later, that latest form of disembodiment, a message on my answering-machine, told me that Shiva had died suddenly of a heart attack. He had always been afraid of death. At least it came to him without warning. We saw him cremated by Hindu rites but in less romantic circumstances than Ram's funeral in *Fireflies*.

When I compare these two writers I am not disinterested and cannot pretend to be even-handed. I don't know Salman Rushdie; Shiva Naipaul was one of my dearest friends, and I miss him. I hope fervently that Mr Rushdie sees off the odious fanatics who have threatened him; but I can't help wishing even more, personally, that Shiva was still here. He had much more to say.

Mother & Son

By Nigel Clive

OF ALL THE FORMS of conventional warfare, civil wars are arguably the most fiercely contested, the most socially destructive, and leave the longest legacy of revenge; in the European post-War period, Greece holds the unenviable distinction of proving the validity of this generalisation. Although the historical evidence of the Greek civil war has been exhaustively analysed by British, American and Greek historians, nowhere has the human impact of those tragic events been more convincingly presented than in Nicholas Gage's two linked volumes of autobiography.

The first, the best-seller *Eleni* (1983), described the primitive customs of life in Lia, his Greek mountain village on the Albanian border, from which he had escaped during the civil war with three of his sisters, thanks to the courage and cunning of their mother, who paid for these virtues with her life. *A Place For Us*[1] continues his story: a virtually illiterate nine-year-old boy, who made his way to America and became at an early age a well-read, sophisticated intellectual, and a deservedly acclaimed author. Although it reads at times like a novel, *A Place For Us* is in fact a closely

[1] *A Place For Us*. By NICHOLAS GAGE. Bantam Press, £14.95.

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researched political and sociological study of a typical Greek family battling its way through life in America, yet never forgetting for a day the social and religious rules of conduct learned in that village—and especially the uncompensatable loss of their beloved mother.

Nicholas Gage translated himself from a Greek village boy with medieval customs into a modern American, but his first ambition in life was to exploit his skills as an investigative journalist. He returned to Greece at the earliest opportunity to begin the trail by interviewing and tape-recording more than 400 individuals who had fought on both sides of the civil war, in order to pinpoint responsibility for the person or persons mainly responsible for his mother's death. Later searches took him to England, Canada, Poland, Hungary, and Czechoslovakia.

Outside Greece, the civil war has usually been dated from the summer of 1946 when organised guerrilla activity, which had started mainly in Macedonia, quickly spread and gathered momentum after the first post-War election, internationally supervised in March 1946, which brought the Right-wing Populist Party to power. The fighting sharply increased soon after the return of King George II, following a plebiscite in his favour, in September 1946; but the self-styled "Democratic Army" (in plainer language: the Communist insurgents) was not defeated until three years later, in August 1949. Within Greece, and to Greeks of the diaspora, especially those in America and Britain, this period from 1946 to 1949 is known as "the Third Round"—the last of three armed attempts by *KKE*, the Communist Party of Greece, to seize power by force.

This third round of civil war was the direct descendant of the Second Round of December 1944, when British troops intervened, on Churchill's orders, to prevent the Communist-controlled resistance movement, *EAM/ELAS* (National Liberation Front/National Liberation Army) from seizing control of Athens and the rest of Greece in the aftermath of the German withdrawal. In its turn, the Second Round stemmed directly from the First Round in October 1943, during the Axis occupation, when *EAM/ELAS* attacked and narrowly failed to smash the other main resistance organisation, *EDES* (National Republican Greek League), which was non-Communist. Hence, in one form or another, the Greek civil war should accurately be described as beginning in 1943.

Except to the participants and their supporters on either side, within and outside Greece, these events were long forgotten by the general public for more than 30 years. Then came a sudden revival of interest when Nicholas Gage, under his American name, published *Eleni*—the story of how his mother, Eleni Gatzoyiannis, had survived in the mountain village of Lia for the whole of the German Occupation and for most of the Third Round of the civil war, until she was arrested, tortured, and finally executed by the Communists in August 1948.

Her crime was that she had successfully arranged for four of her children to escape from the village, which was then occupied by the "Democratic Army". In this way they were spared the so-called *pedhomazema*—the decree of the Communist Provisional Government in March 1948, ordering that all children between the ages of three and fourteen in the Communist-occupied regions of northern Greece should be collected and sent to the "People's Democracies" behind the Iron Curtain. By the end of 1948, more than 28,000 Greek children had been taken from their parents and sent to camps in the Soviet bloc.

Eleni had put a scarf over her head at the age of eleven, and from that moment never dared to speak to a man until the day in 1926 when she was handed over as a bride to Christos Gatzoyiannis, whom she did not know. She never travelled beyond the provincial capital of Ioannina; he had been born in Lia but had emigrated to America in 1910 at the age of nineteen. In 1924 he had become an American citizen, and on a visit to his village he saw and decided to marry (but did not even speak to) Eleni Haidis, then aged seventeen; the deal was clinched with her parents when he handed over a twenty-dollar note. It was considered normal for Christos to return to America after the marriage, leaving Eleni behind in Lia, and to make periodical visits as a result of which she was considered in the village to have been "cursed" with four daughters. When Christos left Lia in 1938, after one of his visits, Eleni did not yet know that she was pregnant with her only son, Nicholas. She became known in the village as "the Americana": and this helped to seal her fate at the hands of the Communists.

Eleni was translated into fourteen languages, and enormously expanded the general knowledge of the Greek civil war. It was also made into a film (with the title role well played by Kate Nelligan) which, when shown in Athens in 1986, caused demonstrations and protests by the Greek Communist Party.[2]

NICHOLAS'S STORY after his escape is taken up once more in *A Place For Us*. In 1949, on a ship bound for America, he first began to learn English. He was travelling with three of his sisters (a fourth had been abducted by the Communists) to meet a father he had never seen, and who turned out to be an underpaid short-order cook in Worcester, Massachusetts, not the millionaire they had imagined. Nicholas had never been in a car before his father drove him from the airport; and it was the first time he had seen a lavatory in a private home. While his sisters, who were ultimately joined by the one who had been abducted, were soon working in a bakery to make both ends meet, their father was already planning to "fix" their marriages as if they were all still living in Lia. This was typical of the tight Greek community then established in Worcester.

Nicholas took some time to dispel what he construed as his father's culpability for his mother's death. At school, however, he progressed unusually swiftly, becoming head of his class and then editor of the school newspaper, which made him a local celebrity. Encouraged by his teacher to revive memories of the past, Nicholas wrote an essay about his mother which won an award from the Freedom Foun-

[2] One explanation of Channel Four's highly controversial television film *The Hidden War* was that it was an attempt to steal the thunder of both the book and the film. See Richard Clogg, "A Case Study in Bias and Distortion", ENCOUNTER, February 1987.

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dation and planted the seed of ambition. By 1958, all his sisters were married and had been blessed with sons. "We were poorer than ever, but this was one of the best times for our family, because we all lived in a three-decker house which was a vertical version of the village clan."

Nicholas by this time was rapidly becoming an ordinary American teenager, whose primary interests lay in picking up girls and developing his skills as a boxer and entertainer. In order to save enough money to pay his way through college, he was quite ready to follow his father's calling and work long hours through the night after studying his school books all day. He soon developed a passion for the theatre, wrote his first review of *Othello*, won a scholarship to Boston University, and became in turn dramatic critic and editor of the *Boston Chronicle*. This greatly pleased his father, who all his life spoke broken English and had to ask what an editor did for a living.

AFTER THIS METEORIC RISE and with extra money in his pocket, Nicholas Gage's first thought was to return to Lia and start research into his mother's death. He was aged twenty-three when he first returned to Greece in 1963, and his visits to impoverished relatives in and around Athens made him marvel at their unselfish hospitality. In Lia he was shocked by seeing his grandparents near starvation, but much more so by the fact that to them Eleni's death was a thing of the past; to him it was still an open wound. On his return to the US, his career as a journalist continued. He broke with tradition by marrying a Scandinavian in 1970—but in a traditional Greek ceremony and only after he had received his father's blessing. After covering drug raids, corruption scandals, and Mafia wars, he would return at weekends to stay with his sisters in Worcester and enjoy the Greek feast days, dances, and church services, while keeping an eye on his father, who eventually died at the age of eighty-eight.

In 1977, he returned to Athens for a two-year stint as *New York Times* correspondent covering the Middle East, but when he had put enough aside he resigned in order to complete his life-long ambition, which resulted in *Eleni* and *A Place For Us*—works which provide moving and incontrovertible evidence that remembrance is too mild a word to describe what Greeks of the diaspora feel about their birthplace. For only in Greece, and particularly in his own village, did Nicholas Gage feel he was at home. If one stands in the congregation of any overseas Greek church on Easter Day or on 25 March (Greek Independence Day), and watches the faces of Greeks of all ages, however long- and well-established abroad, one can understand the depth of his sincerity, and the true meaning of the word nostalgia.

Valentine

By long tradition
rejected lovers pine
for lost embraces.
Your kiss, your hand in mine—
o separation.

No lyric poet
as far as I can tell
records the spaces
that give me hell.
Do they not know it?

The doors are shuttered
where I would wander free
and naked. Who draws my curtains?
Who makes your waking tea?
So much unuttered.

Jobs that we started
you finish: your own task.
The casual question
I can no longer ask
since we are parted.

The empty spaces—
chair, table, bed
and conversation—
ring in my head
much worse than lost embraces.

Valerie Smith

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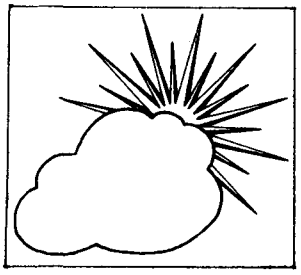
Gloomy Clouds & Laughing Sun

Naguib Mahfouz, Nobel Laureate—By D. J. ENRIGHT



I SHALL CONSIDER these novels by Naguib Mahfouz in the order not of their publication but of my reading of them, which, it seems to me, is also the ascending order of their interest. It needs to be emphasised that what is being discussed is the novels as they appear in English translation.

The thief of *The Thief and the Dogs* (1961)[1] is Said Mahran, released after four years in prison, and determined to take revenge on those who (he believes) betrayed him, notably Ilish Sidra and Nabawiyya, his former wife, now married to Ilish. Nabawiyya prompts one of the overflowings of stream-of-consciousness which crop up throughout: "How I wish our eyes could meet, so I might behold one of the secrets of hell! Oh for the axe and the sledgehammer!" Better it might have been had Said stuck to the axe or the sledgehammer, but someone provides him with a gun. It used to be said that "he was Death Incarnate, that his shot never missed", but twice he contrives to kill some unfortunate bystander in mistake for his targets, consoling himself ingeniously with the thought, "As for your gun, it's obvious that it will kill only the innocent. You'll be its last victim."

"Using theft to relieve the exploiters of some of their guilt", an erstwhile friend once told Said, "is absolutely legitimate." To what extent his burglaries were ever motivated or extenuated by social or political considerations is obscure. Some cryptic but clearly unworldly wisdom derives from a Sufi sheikh with whom he takes refuge—"Weak are the seeker and the sought", "God's slave is owned by God alone"—but whose sayings have less effect on Said than they may have on the Western reader, likely to welcome a touch of exotic metaphysics.

"A world without morals is like a universe without gravity": it is by killing his enemies that he will restore the world and enable himself "to die a death that has some meaning to it". Said remains a blurred, grubby mixture of Robin Hood and Raskolnikov. His delusion that millions of people are on his side, all of them except "the real robbers", his vision of himself as a kind of redeemer, as "good principles, consolation, the tears that recall the weeper to humility", bear no relation to what we know of his actions. The claim in the introduction that the reader gains deep and authentic impressions of the values of Egyptian society in the wake of the revolution of 1952 is hard to trust, since everything is seen through Said's bloodshot eyes; and similarly the accompanying implication that society has corrupted him carries little weight. We have no intimation of Said uncorrupted. His ineptness arouses some sympathy in us, but severely curtailed, for he is a "case" rather than a character, and it comes as a relief, even a merciful release, when police dogs corner this mad one.

Wedding Song (1981)[2] is more complex, more animated; somewhat in the manner of Akutagawa's "In a Grove", the short story which inspired the film *Rashomon*, four characters give their own versions of the same events. The central figure, Abbas Younis, is the son of a once loving but now hating couple (to say of them, as the man does, that they have "become like two bare trees", is exceptionally mild) who make a living by running a kind of brothel and gambling den frequented by actors and actresses. Abbas, an idealistic—or priggish—young man, believes that "Good will triumph"; his father opines that he is "sick with the disease of virtue", a disease which is far from epidemic in the neighbourhood.

Abbas marries Tahiya, an actress with a past; she dies, and so does their child. He then writes a play, based on truth but riskily representing himself as the murderer of wife and child. What he has imagined—he contends—is theatrically stronger than what actually happened. "Inwardly, art is a means of expurgation, outwardly a means of battle, incumbent on men born and reared in sin and determined to rebel against it." The play is enormously, if somewhat implausibly, successful; and it seems odd that Abbas isn't called on to help the police with their inquiries.

The company's leading actress observes jocularly, "We're living in times when sex has become a national pursuit." Along with opium and alcohol, sex is certainly rife, though never "explicit". Happiness shows itself only in fleeting memories of the past. Virtually everybody hates, fears or

[1] *The Thief and the Dogs*. By NAGUIB MAHFOUZ. Translated by TREVOR LE GASSICK and M. M. BADAWI. Revised by JOHN RODENBECK. Introduction by TREVOR LE GASSICK. Doubleday, £4.95.

[2] *Wedding Song*. By NAGUIB MAHFOUZ. Translated by OLIVE E. KENNY. Edited and revised by MURSI SAAD EL DIN and JOHN RODENBECK. Introduction by MURSI SAAD EL DIN. Doubleday, £4.95.

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despises everybody else; and, not for the only time when reading these English versions, one is inclined to suggest that since Arabic and English are so different as modes of discourse, the reader should perhaps divide by two or three what looks much like histrionics, hyperbole, and rant. If Mahfouz's people really meant what they utter, they would have wiped one another out before the story began. His characters are larger than life, and yet debarred from much of it.

The metaphors are intriguing rather than illuminating. Believing that Abbas has killed himself, his mother remarks, "Evil is playing flute music for Abbas." The fairly loathsome actor, Tariq Ramadan, muses that the loss of his mistress, Tahiya, has robbed him of his confidence and his trust in life: "What replaced them was madness—in the shape of love, which broke out of the dark corner of its lair, shook off the lethargy of long hibernation, and went to seek the food it had been missing." Sinisterly high-flown language which has little to do with our apprehension of the man. What, one wonders, is the purport and the effect of the original Arabic? Like a woman, or so the saying goes, you cannot expect a translation to be both beautiful and faithful; but it can be both literal and untrue.

Finally, having left a suicide note, Abbas is preserved by some strange, indeterminate ecstasy. "Let its strength remain unfathomably in its mystery! Lo, its life-giving force marches forward, bearing with it the fragrance of triumph!" Conceivably, as Mursi Saad El Din proposes in his introduction, this sense of triumph is by no means illusory, and Abbas's power of transformation derives from his creative power as an artist. Had we seen more of his artistic creativity, we might not find it equally conceivable that grief and suffering have deranged him. At this point, and despite the faith that through the mediation of literature nothing is alien to us, we may suspect that a sizeable cultural divide precludes us from full understanding and sympathy.

WHILE INTENSELY MISERABLE, *The Beginning and the End* (1949)[3] is marginally more sober in utterance, in the tradition of "realism", although nothing is left to the imagination where emotions are concerned, and the epithets still settle like a flock of raucous birds. In one sentence revolt is "boiling", bitterness is "poisonous", despair is "fatal", a feeling of loneliness is "tortured". On the death of the father, a minor official in the Ministry of Education, a Cairene family in the 1930s is reduced to poverty—relatively speaking a genteel poverty, but all the more painful in the loss of face and the humiliations it entails. The eldest son, Hassan Kamel Ali, is a work-shy ne'er-do-well and then a criminal; the younger boys, Hussein and Hassanein, find respectable jobs, the one as a school clerk, the other as an Army officer, but the need to keep up appearances consumes most of their earnings. The daughter, Nefisa, sinks into dress-making (as a hobby it was acceptable, but not as paid work: and here the metaphor is pointed—"Misery pierces our flesh as a needle pierces a piece of cloth") and then into discreetly conveyed prostitution.

Rare flashes of humour break through the gloom, as when Hassan gorges himself at a wedding party ("He was at his greatest when he swallowed an entire pigeon, bones and all"), and also moments of shared happiness, arising from family affection and the kindly acts of neighbours. "Occupation! Independence!" exclaims the stalwart mother, obliged to sell most of their furniture. "I don't see the difference between them." Political matters feature as quaintly as prostitution. "We must all be rich", Hassanein says; to which Hussein replies, "And if this is impossible?" "Then we must all be poor." "And if this is impossible, too?" "In that case", Hassanein tells him, "we must revolt, murder, and steal." Hussein concludes this basic account of human endeavour by remarking that mankind has been doing exactly that for thousands of years.

Mahfouz is an admirer of Thomas Mann, and this novel bears an obvious surface resemblance to *Buddenbrooks*, another story of "the Decline of a Family". It is a far less sophisticated work, or, one should rather say, a much narrower one, for all its documentary merit. The Kamel Ali family are trapped; self-sacrifice cannot save them, any more than selfishness could be held responsible for their ruin; they trust in God, but are subject, it would appear, to Hardy's President of the Immortals. Nefisa's degradation will be the final straw: obsessed with his dignity, Lieutenant Hassanein advises her to drown herself, and then follows suit.

The struggles we witness are patently futile, the end will be at one with the beginning: which is why the nefarious antics of Hassan and the other denizens of the underworld actually bring some respite, if only because we don't have to feel pity for them. "Pity would be no more/ If we did not make somebody Poor": but to endure pity over 400 pages, however worthy its objects, is asking a lot.

HOW DID NAGUIB MAHFOUZ come to be awarded the Nobel Prize? *Palace Walk* (1956), the first volume of his Cairo Trilogy,[4] answers the question. It can hardly be a better, more restrained translation alone that makes this novel shine out so. At 500 pages, and barely covering the years 1917-19, it is Victorianly dense; and if perhaps the author dwells on things rather too long and minutely for Western sensibilities, leaving rather too little unsaid, it is credible, engrossing, even exciting. It is here, in the words of the Swedish Academy of Letters, that Mahfouz displays "an Arabic narrative art that applies to all mankind", and displays that art richly.

Al-Sayyid Ahmad is a prosperous grocer and a strict paterfamilias, whose word is absolute law over his wife Amina and their three sons and two daughters. At home he is all "prudence, dignity, and gravity", dreaded and feared in his own family. But only there. At nights, away from home, he is an exuberant boon companion, singer, story-teller, wit, fount of wisdom, drinker, womaniser, and universal favour-

[3] *The Beginning and the End*. By NAGUIB MAHFOUZ. Translated by RAMSES AWAD. Edited by MASON ROSSITER SMITH. Introduction by RAMSES AWAD. Doubleday, £5.95.

[4] *Palace Walk*. By NAGUIB MAHFOUZ. Translated by WILLIAM M. HUTCHINS and OLIVE E. KENNY. Doubleday, £12.95, $17.95.

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ite. He sees no great need to reconcile these disparate personalities; nobody is hurt by his behaviour, he reasons, and since he is more than usually devout in other, more essential respects, surely God will not hold his peccadilloes against him? "God is beautiful and loves beauty", he murmurs, after feasting his eyes on the "prodigious bottom" of a female singer. He has elevated lust "to its purest and most delicate form"; and when he proposes to her that, by way of an overture, they should recite the opening prayer of the Qur'an, he is reasonably confident that God will pardon any hint of blasphemy. It was God who made men what they are—manly.

In which thought his wife, truly wifely, concurs: manliness involves tyranny, arrogance, and staying out late at nights. Amina is docile, long-suffering, affectionate—it was how God made women—and immensely proud of her brilliant husband. Her loving nature embraces infidels; she prays to God to watch over all people, "Muslims and Christians, even the English, my Lord", though she would like the English to be driven out of the land as a favour to her son Fahmy, who isn't very fond of them.

Yasin, al-Sayyid Ahmad's son by a previous wife, aspires to emulate his father's flamboyant way of life, but lacks the style, nerve and gallantry of that "Lord of Laughter". He shows little finesse in his love-making, falling on his inamorata "like a bull elephant crushing a gazelle". He marries a girl with Turkish blood in her, who is used to more freedom than she can hope for in her new family. The marriage turns sour; Yasin is caught in the act with a black maidservant—not only a servant but black and over forty!—and divorce ensues. The peculiar humiliation is that Yasin isn't divorcing his wife but his wife is divorcing him. "There was nothing strange about a man casting out a pair of shoes, but shoes were not supposed to throw away their owner." It is in such light asides that Mahfouz lets slip his personal views on manners and morals.

The year is 1919, and Fahmy, the second son, a law student, has joined the freedom movement. Al-Sayyid Ahmad, a temperate patriot himself but too grand to engage in political plotting, isn't spared indignity; while returning from an assignation one night, he is picked up by British soldiers and made to help in filling in a large trench dug across the road by youthful demonstrators. Disobeying his father's prohibition—al-Sayyid Ahmad's children "were meant to be a breed apart, outside the framework of history", their particular history prescribed by him—Fahmy is killed during a peaceful demonstration.

WHAT EFFECT these chastening events will have on the family and its head remains to be told. It should be said that much of the book is happy, albeit a domestic crisis arises when Amina, who had barely left the house since her marriage at thirteen years of age, twenty-five years before, takes the opportunity to visit a shrine while her husband is away on business. Pious as the outing is, and covered though she is from head to foot, she pays the price; she is knocked down by a car and fractures a collar-bone, the escapade comes to light, and al-Sayyid Ahmad turns her out of the house, temporarily. It stands to reason that a libertine will feel an inordinate concern for the females of his own family, and he even dislikes hearing the names of his daughters spoken outside the confines of the house. In this case it is a question of pride, of preserving total authority, but he knows what a good woman and wife Amina is. In one of Mahfouz's vivid metaphors—another has al-Sayyid Ahmad's eyes running over a woman's body "as quickly and greedily as a mouse on a sack of rice looking for a place to get in"—Amina visualises her husband with typical indulgence as "a mother cat which appears to be devouring her kittens when she is actually carrying them".

The children want for nothing, except a degree of independence; their lives are constricted, but they are far removed from the unrelenting and predictable doom bearing down on the characters in the other books mentioned here. They quarrel and then make up, transient sorrows yield to passing joys, just as "in Cairo, during the winter, the sky can be gloomy with clouds and it even drizzles, but in an hour or less the clouds will have scattered to reveal a pure blue sky and a laughing sun".

There are many incidental pleasures for the reader, as when a sheikh famous for his healing prayers, candour and wit upbraids al-Sayyid Ahmad for his lustfulness and, dangerously out of place in a merchant, excessive generosity. Discomposed by the first of these accusations, against which his repartee has for once proved ineffective, the grocer sees a chance to get his own back: if generosity is a fault, should he not reclaim the customary gift of rice, coffee and soap that he has just given the sheikh? "The gift to me is not excessive. Begin somewhere else, you son of Abd al-Jawad", the sheikh replies. And when Fahmy announces that nationalist leaders plan to travel to London to lobby for independence, his mother is astonished. The English have been there so long, long before Fahmy was born, that they have come to be neighbours. How can the leaders go to the land of the English to ask them to get out of Egypt? "This is in very bad taste. How could you visit me in my house if you're wanting to throw me out of yours?" Amina's grasp of chronology is not too firm, and to mollify her son she grants that perhaps all will be well if they speak nicely to the great queen—she remembers her father talking about her—for

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after all she is a woman and no doubt bears a sensitive heart in her chest.

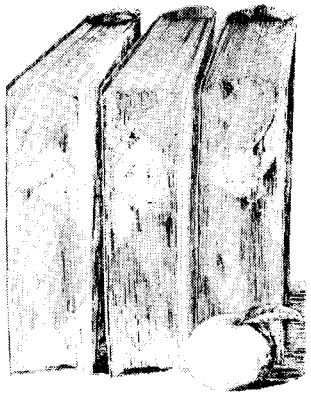
Mahfouz has a loving and intimate gift for portraying women, and the greatest, most refined pleasure stems from the females of the household: Amina (in whom docility doesn't rule out character), the beautiful golden-haired Aisha, and the big-nosed, sharp-tongued Khadija, edgy on the subject of her marital prospects, of whom Yasin observes that in communal life she resembles salt: it doesn't taste good by itself, but food has no taste without it.

The prize charmer is the small boy, Kamal—affectionate, puzzled, inquisitive, both comical and perceptive in his reflections on domestic and public affairs. He dotes on his sisters, why must they marry and go away? And why is it that their bellies swell up soon after? He thinks the British soldiers have handsome faces ("They look like Aisha!") and enjoys playing with them in their camp. They treat him to chocolate and cups of tea, he listens respectfully to their singing and, being (like his father) no mean singer himself, entertains them in return. More conscious than his father of contrarieties and the need to reconcile them, he dreams of an Egyptian victory, followed by an honourable armistice which his foreign friends and Fahmy's friends will celebrate together with songs and sweetmeats. Fortunately he is still young enough to be regarded as an honorary woman, and therefore not accountable for his political naivety. God willing, he should grow into a fine man, just as long as manliness doesn't overcome him, with dimensions of intelligence and sensibility unknown to his father and brothers.

Kamal alone, though conscientiously one should throw in the history of Egypt too, is sufficient reason for us to look forward to the translation of the two remaining parts of Mahfouz's trilogy, which carry the narrative up to the end of World War II.

The Healer's Knife

A Doctor's Diaries—By DONALD THOMAS



"HE PASSED green urine for me in a decorated drinking glass." Like a good many sentences in Hugh Selbourne's *A Doctor's Life*,[1] this has a memorable quality, conveying the laconic, incisive tone of one for whom professional difficulty and private melancholy were offset by an eye for the pretentious and the phoney, and a well-trained sense of the ridiculous. Judging by his photographs in this volume, Selbourne surveyed the world with a deceptively easy gaze. Look closer, and it is a scrutiny of mankind's foibles that seems undeviating as a laser . . . . By case-histories and terminal symptoms, these pages will feast the most jaded hypochondriac. (And there are hints for the medically unwary. Don't sit in deck-chairs, for example, unless you want an early pulmonary embolism and a quick exit: the promenades and gardens of England are a sunny death-trap.)

Though Selbourne's diaries and case histories were not written for publication, they read like a polemic aimed equally at the bureaucrats of the National Health Service and the medical Establishment, as well as against a born cunning and avarice in the Welfare State's most forward clients. The pugnacity of his view of the lazy, the dishonest and the jack-in-office reflects his own upbringing. David Selbourne, the editor of these papers, remarks that when his father began practising in Manchester in 1936, he was "an unlikely Parisian putting down his roots in the world of Walter Greenwood's *Love on the Dole*". Born in Montmartre in 1906, Hugh Selbourne came to England in 1914. His mother worked as a seamstress in the East End of London, and a childhood of hard work, self-help, and maternal ambition spurred him to qualify as a doctor by the age of twenty-two. It also unsuited him for the client mentality of the Welfare State at its worst. Yet he was a youthful member of the Socialist Medical Association and his comments on Tory leaders of the 1960s, and on the "shits and fascists" of mass racism, are corrosive.

In 1936 Selbourne married a Rabbi's daughter, Sulamith Amiel of Antwerp. They and their children lived in a mill-owner's house among the terraced Lowry-land of Dukinfield, in the industrial North of England, and later in South Manchester. Apart from the work of his consulting rooms in St John Street, he was senior consultant physician to the Ashton, Hyde, and Glossop group of hospitals (as well as visiting works doctor at the Audenshaw engineering firm of Arnfield's). Deprived of his consultancy at the inception of the NHS, it took the intervention of Aneurin Bevan as well as his local Member of Parliament to restore Selbourne to his post. He certainly retained reservations about a service that he believed would only work if those with sufficient wealth paid for their treatment—and if those patients who abused the system by thousands were prevented from doing so.

[1] *A Doctor's Life: The Diaries of Hugh Selbourne M.D. 1960-63.* Edited with an introduction by DAVID SELBOURNE. Jonathan Cape, £12.95.

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His unease had other roots. In the new world of bureaucratic medicine, Selbourne was a heretic. He regarded medicine as a humane science, much as men had done two centuries before. But while the limit of his colleagues' interests seemed to be old trains and old trams, Freemasonry, adultery, fornication and drink, he went home to a more comforting private world.

In the lumber-room at the top of his Manchester house, there was a collection of books bought during his life as a doctor, and now on permanent loan to the University of Birmingham. In crude financial terms it could not be purchased today for a million pounds, nor perhaps twice that. Fine editions of 17th-century science, medicine, plays and poetry took pride of place. There were so many treasures that he seems to have forgotten some and was constantly being pleased by their rediscovery. In passing, he notes a volume of Nelson's manuscript despatches, manuscripts of Harrison Ainsworth's letters, and one of Thackeray's original illustrations for *Vanity Fair*. His mistake was not buying a first edition of Newton's *Principia* for £100, though he had most of the subsequent early editions. To pay for his travels round the world, he sold eight books, including the first edition of *Paradise Lost* and Swinburne's copy of the first printing of George Chapman's *Revenge of Bussy d'Ambois* (1613). He was such a good customer of Sherratt and Hughes that, when he was recovering from a coronary thrombosis, J. D. Hughes presented him with a first edition of Boswell's *Life of Johnson*.

Angina and insomnia were his afflictions. Often he would sleep little more than an hour or two before getting up to write his diary or, more soothingly, to "arrange" his books on the shelves in the lumber-room. After the death of a patient, another doctor might have come home to a stiff drink or bed. On Easter Day 1960, Hugh Selbourne consoled himself by unwrapping a fine copy of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, printed in Parma in 1565. Visitors took little interest in his collection beyond asking whether he had read all the books. Elsewhere they inquired if it was really true, as they had heard, that he collected old *books*. "No", said Hugh Selbourne, maliciously reassuring, "Old *boots*." In such trivial skirmishes, the collector of Newton and George Herbert felt he had diminished the confident philistines.

SELBOURNE'S PERCEPTION OF motive and conduct rivalled his skill as a diagnostician—small wonder if NHS bureaucracy and some of his colleagues felt uneasy under his direct and sardonic observation. Among his hospital colleagues, the "pugnacious little squirt" surely guessed Hugh Selbourne's opinion of him even from a dispassionate glance. And so, perhaps, did the lesbian hospital Sister, unblushingly fondling the breasts of new entrants to her profession during their routine medical examinations. Nor was it difficult, one imagines, for him to make an enemy of the doctor on duty "dead drunk", or the deceitful gambler, or he whose sexual conquests ended in blackmail by a pregnant nurse.

In the brave new world of the NHS, hospital life inspired little confidence. The post-mortem room is described as a "shambles" on one occasion, with the bodies of the dead from the carnage of a road accident lying randomly on

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stretchers. Diagnosis is less than perfect as a patient admitted in a diabetic coma is energetically and fatally treated for gastritis by those on duty. If it came to an argument, Dr Selbourne was not one to step down when he felt—correctly, as it often seems—that he was in the right. He replies "in equal measure", as he puts it. Confronted by a colleague with unsubtle threats of a coroner's inquest if a certain patient's case went wrong, Selbourne gave him "the polite works with shafts of venom".

A MAN WHO WAS merely crusty and blimpish might have behaved in this manner. But Hugh Selbourne was not. He had been a youthful medical Socialist in the 1930s, his early practice in the South Wales desolation of Dowlais in the Depression. Thereafter, he was a Liberal voter—and a radical, if not a democrat, in many of his sentiments. Though his dealings with the Manchester proletariat and medical bureaucracy gave him a poor opinion of the human species, his greatest scorn was reserved for upper-class posers and parasites. His cameos of public figures include Cecil Beaton looking like a homosexual psychopath, Hailsham as a mediocre blimp, Prince Rainier who had spent the war in his "funk-hole of a principality". He wanted the honours system abolished, and denounced the royal gathering in 1963 for the wedding of Princess Alexandra and Angus Ogilvy as "Effete and decadent princelings of an outdated aristocracy".

Selbourne blamed the working class for perpetuating such flummery, writing like a man who had wanted that class to come into its own with the post-War world. Instead, it was to swing the lead with craft and dedication, resorting to cajolery and indignation when necessary. He did not live to see the worst. Calls to the police to remove violent patients lay two decades later; surveillance cameras and the occasional uniformed patrol were not yet necessary in casualty departments; there were no screens flashing messages from hospital staff under attack, and giving the location; it was unheard of for a young man to take an injured friend to hospital and emerge with stitches in his face for a cut received from another patient's knife. Even the 1960s were still a golden age of *Emergency Ward 10*.

But then, as now, the bureaucracy of the NHS was screened by the smiler and the promiser in national government. Medical practitioners were already answerable to the Regional Hospital Board, with its evasive yet authoritarian administrators and vocal political interests. Not only could such a board make the life of an individual doctor difficult, it could terminate it altogether. One colleague of Hugh Selbourne's dropped dead before the members of the Board while appealing against his excessive work-load. ("What a circus of evil men constitute the Regional Board and its bureaucratic ringleaders!") And behind the titles of such committees stood the reality of local politicians, including one of Hugh Selbourne's patients, "an ambitious, uncouth mountebank". After a committee meeting of more than usual pomposity, Selbourne notes with a fatalistic satisfaction: "These people think they will live for ever."

In practice as a general physician in Manchester, he saw the best and worst in his patients. The medical reports which intersperse his personal diary show how quick he is to admire the lady who had been a prisoner in Belsen; or another "woman of great courage", battling against blindness, Parkinson's disease, and the effects of a road accident, but having managed to bring up three daughters after her husband's desertion. In the case of a man with paraplegia and Hodgkin's Disease, Selbourne salutes "a hero in suffering".

Lord Horder circumspectly admired his "human approach", while ordinary folk who appeared before him in varying degrees of disquiet and mortal sickness thought him "straight", "down to earth", and "a friend to hundreds of people". But he did not tolerate fools or frauds. The NHS with its entitlements and benefits, the insurance claims for which he carried out examinations on referral, appealed to humanity at its greedy and gobbling worst. Repeatedly, at the end of his case notes, the conclusion is: "The sooner he starts work again the better", or "Bugger all wrong with him". "He strikes me as a layabout", is a stereotype Andy Capp, off work for four months with an ill-defined pain in the neck, while drinking 30-40 pints of beer a week and smoking 20-30 cigarettes a day on the money brought in by his wife and children. A woman who had sustained cuts and bruises seemed thunderstruck on being told she was well enough to go back to work after ten weeks off. As Hugh Selbourne notes of another case, "This accident has fallen on poor soil". Occasionally there is a mischievous tone in the notes, as in the diagnosis of a female patient, when Selbourne, calling on his wide reading of 17th-century science, invokes the authority of William Harvey, physician to Charles I at the battle of Edgehill, to suggest that the lady needs nothing more than "hymeneal exercises".

WHETHER the practice of medicine has deteriorated since the years of these diaries remains an open question. Against last year's report by St James's Hospital, Leeds, that the first examiners of allegedly abused children could not tell impetigo rash from cigarette burns nor bruises from birthmarks, misjudgments recorded in Selbourne's diaries seem less flagrant. The number of hours before the victim of a heart-attack is likely to see a doctor or a specialist is no worse than in the 1950s—but no better either. The worst of casualty departments now is not the football supporter roaming with a stanley knife but cases reported as the result of recent court action and television publicity. It is a man brought in with a damaged liver and left for twelve hours to bleed to death while junior doctors and consultants ponder what to do.

The life of Hugh Selbourne and his family moved against the background of a comfortable provincial society in the 1960s, more comfortable indeed than the brash prosperity of the 1980s. Money still bought quality, and customers had not yet been demoted to punters. Even buying toffees or having a haircut has a resonance of upholstered self-indulgence, with nights of "amazing nonsense" at the Masonic lodge and evenings of "tosh" (but good things too) at the theatre. Despite the rapacity of the Inland Revenue, there is an air

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of financial independence and security. There are dinner parties with friends of a similar type, where the worst indiscretion appears to be the "kerbside consultation" sought quietly by the host on the state of his foreskin.

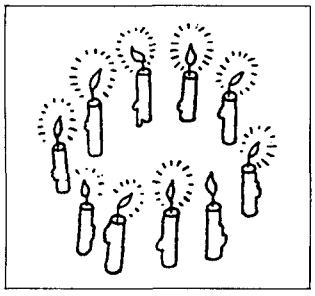
The professional battles in the diaries remain archetypal, for a figure like the "pugnacious little squirt" is common to most employments. But the sources of the diarist's frustration are now more general. An urge to construct meetings of such tedium and aimlessness as to leave the participant with a sense of irreversible brain damage has long been the hallmark of academia and public services, as well as of the NHS. Worse still is the new zeal of the tenuously employed to obey circulars and directives, lest they be remembered in the next public-spending cuts. Few, like Hugh Selbourne, remain ready to administer to Jacks and Jills in office "the polite works with shafts of venom".

Milking the Cow of the World

Metaphysics & Poetry—By HERBERT LOMAS

"Finally, all these poets write within a culture in which physical science has replaced metaphysics as the model of the knowable. The epistemological shift towards scientific models of verification has caused the usual throes of fundamentalist reaction in American culture, as elsewhere; but there is no significant poet who does not mirror, both formally and in preoccupations, the absence of the transcendent."

HELEN VENDLER, **The Faber Book of Contemporary American Poetry** (1986)



AS ONE WOULD expect, Helen Vendler, currently the most influential and formative of American poetry critics, has been unable to supply "verification" for the above statement.[1] Her anthology could hardly supply it, for the disparate poets sometimes resemble each other in nothing but their markers for transcendence: Richard Wilbur and Allen Ginsberg, for instance.

Succinct evidence for Wilbur's metaphysics can be supplied from "Epistemology" (in his second book, *Ceremony*, 1950):

I

Kick at the rock, Sam Johnson, break your bones:
But cloudy, cloudy is the stuff of stones.

II

We milk the cow of the world, and as we do
We whisper in her ear, "You are not true."

This particular item has not been included in the anthology, but naturally the book is replete with metaphysical items. The first poem by the youngest poet, the black poet Rita Dove (b. 1952), is a fine example:

I prove a theorem and the house expands:
the windows jerk free to hover near the ceiling,
the ceiling floats away with a sigh.

As the walls clear themselves of everything
but transparency, the scent of carnations
leaves with them. I am out in the open

and above the windows have hinged into butterflies,
sunlight glinting where they've intersected.
They are going to some point true and unproven.

Critics should be wary of their generalisations—and especially careful with the impulse to lash out for the boundary when the ball is coming neatly down on to the middle stump. Vendler's philosophising is curiously naive: she reveals herself as unaware that "physical science" has a metaphysic of its own. And to imply that there is nothing but a binary opposition between "scientific models of verification" and "fundamentalist reaction" is simplification to the point of caricature.

In the unverifiable-generalisation stakes, I much prefer the opposite proposition: that there is no poet of abiding interest, either in America or in England, who does not show evidence of a preoccupation with the transcendent. I do not claim that this is true; merely that it indicates a preference. Yet I would argue that it is a mature preference: any poet who has dismissed "the transcendent" has automatically cut out dimensions of psychological, existential and philosophical interest that reduce human experience to a shallowness comparable to the mess of discount stores, advertisements, gas stations and fast-eat joints on the outskirts of a typical American town.

Timidity about transcendence is surely a serious disqualification for a poet. The good American poets are in revolt against the shallowness of their culture, the impoverished quality of its life, of which Vendler's statement is the philosophical counterpart. As Allen Ginsberg puts it:

America I've given you all and now I'm nothing. . . .
America why are your libraries full of tears? . . .
I haven't read the newspapers for months, everyday somebody goes on trial for murder. . . .

[1] See Bruce Bawer, "Helen Vendler, Poetry Critic", *Hudson Review*, Winter 1989.

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I'm addressing you.
Are you going to let your emotional life be run by Time *Magazine? . . .*
Its cover stares at me every time I slink past the corner candystore.
It's always telling me about responsibility. Businessmen are serious. Movie producers are serious.
Everybody's serious but me.
It occurs to me that I am America.
I am talking to myself again.
The Russia wants to eat us alive. The Russia's power mad.
She wants to take our cars from our garages.
Her wants to grab Chicago. Her needs a Red Reader's Digest.
Her wants our autoplants in Siberia. Him big bureaucracy running our filling stations. . . .
Amerlca this is quite serious.
America this is the impression I get from looking in the television set.
America is this correct?

I DON'T EXEMPT Britain from the increasing confusion about what is serious. What America does (and thinks) today, England does (and thinks) tomorrow; and we have been moving towards tomorrow very fast. What has been tried in America and proved to be barren, a human and perhaps even a technical failure, will be implemented in Britain next week.

We surely need to wake up to the connection between the extraordinary ugliness, violence, and muddle we are creating and the shallowness of our intellectual suppositions—personally I'd say more: our spiritual condition. For me it is no coincidence that the three great English-speaking poets of this century, Yeats, Eliot and Auden, were not only outstandingly intelligent but also "religious" in their very different ways.

There is a hollow at the centre where the source of life ought to be, and it is making the most sensitive of us desperate. Yet I am well aware I cannot prove this. Nor do I care. One of the most offensive current assumptions is that what cannot be proved not only can be but has been proved. Science has its distinguished place, which no sensible person will disparage, but it has long outdistanced its ancient metaphysic and is due for important philosophical changes. And it always will be due for change. Even if it were to come up with some final conclusion next week, or before we die, it could not satisfy us: the successful and permanently renewable hypotheses of science are not suitable myths for the life of the psyche. They can tell us how things work; they can tell us nothing about the meaning of things, or ultimate meanings.

Nothing that scientists can ever discover will explain the meaning of existence to us. Science may tell us more about the grandeur of God, or the grandeur of not-God, but that is all it can tell us about God. The truth about life remains where it has always been and always will be—in the intuitive world of experience, and in the philosophical and theological speculations that sensitive life stimulates in intelligent people.

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THE GOOD POET will stick to experience in both his poetry and the rest of his life; but experience contains philosophical and theological ideas in solution—in varying degrees of consciousness. Everyone has a philosophy and a theology—for atheism is an unverifiable faith that God does not exist. "I don't believe in all this philosophical nonsense. I just believe in what I can see and taste and smell and touch": empiricism. "Philosophy? I just believe in dealing with problems as they come up in the best way I can": pragmatism. Theodore Roethke writes the complete pragmatist poem:

I wake to sleep and take my waking slow.
I feel my fate in what I cannot fear.
I learn by going where I have to go.

We think by feeling. What is there to know?
I hear my being dance from ear to ear.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

Of those so close beside me, which are you?
God bless the Ground! I shall walk softly there,
And learn by going where I have to go.

Light takes the Tree; but who can tell us how?
The lowly worm climbs up a winding stair;
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.

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Great Nature has another thing to do
To you and me; so take the lively air,
And, lovely, learn by going where to go.

This shaking keeps me steady. I should know.
What falls away is always. And is near.
I wake to sleep, and take my waking slow.
I learn by going where I have to go.

This poem shows not only a "preoccupation" with "the transcendent" but, for me, an acceptable preoccupation: it does not claim to know more than it does know; but it is aware that there is more than it knows, and that as individuals and as a race we have a long way to grow in knowledge.

Our philosophical and theological positions, conscious or unconscious, thought-out or casually taken-for-granted, are no light matters: they shape the way we feel. If someone we love dies, we shall have vastly different *experiences*, depending on our beliefs. Is death the end, or is life here like the life of a foetus in the womb, for whom an incomprehensible birth awaits? Or are we in doubt—acknowledging merely a possibility within the unknown? Whatever our stand is concerning these unverifiable speculations, we shall feel it on our pulses.

Poetry is an extension of experience in the imagination, and while it is very different from philosophy—being an art, concerned with aesthetic pleasure, not information—it is, like ordinary experience, saturated with emotionally formative ideas. Mark Strand's "Coming to This" is, in its statement of the bleak absence of the transcendent, preoccupied with the transcendent:

We have done what we wanted.
We have discarded dreams, preferring the heavy industry
of each other, and we have welcomed grief
and called ruin the impossible habit to break.
And now we are here.
The dinner is ready and we cannot eat.
The meat sits in the white lake of its dish.
The wine waits.

Coming to this
has its rewards: nothing is promised, nothing is taken away.
We have no heart or saving grace,
no place to go, no reason to remain.

Charles Simic's "The Cold" is a similar poem. It is aware that the absence of the transcendent constitutes a cage—while the poem does not go into the possible implications, leaving that to the reader:

As if in a presence of an intelligence
Concentrating, I thought myself
Scrutinized and measured closely
By the barrens of sky and earth,

And then algebraized and entered
In a notebook page blank and white
Except for the parallel blue lines
Which might have been bars,

For I kept walking and walking,
And it got darker and then there was
A flicker of a light or two
Far above and beyond the large cage.

Let us admit that these last two poems are acceptable cries of disturbance at the dilemma of disinheritance—more, of disablement: a dimension of spirit has been amputated. Yet their bald prosaic statements seem more than an admission of despair: the style is an implicit confession of the impossibility of poetry. A necessary thirst for intuitive speculation and perhaps spiritual or mystical encounter is unslaked, and the poet has been left without the heart for poetry.

Southern Sonnet 2

Woke up this morning with one clear thought on my mind:
You don't need my love cause you love yourself enough
For two; if you are the orange, I am the rind,
Peeled off, thrown in the trash till I don't take this guff
No more; if I could just pry you from your mirror
Long enough to blink and look deep in my eyes,
I don't promise paradise, but there are heroes
Too who sit still and bloom their hearts before they die;
If only rosy-fingered dawn on white missals . . . .
Can't go on cause it's chilly here, so chilly here
With this vain nor'easter staring through the thistles
Of your heart: elegant briar patch, briar patch of fear.
Woke up this morning with the same ol' worried blues
Mute as my purple passion and wandering jews.

Lisa Forestier

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Books Encountered

The Cambridge Companion to James Joyce. Edited by DEREK ATTRIDGE. Cambridge University Press, £27.50, paper £8.95; $39.50, paper $12.95.

Neither some new Cantabrigian egeria nor a dull concordance, this is a very readable collection of essays on aspects of Joyce: reading him, his Irishness, Paris, Europe, feminism, modernism, and each of the works. The scholarship, like the bibliography, is bang up to date. Highly recommended to both novices and buffs.

Cool Memories. By JEAN BAUDRILLARD. Translated by CHRIS TURNER. Verso, £29.95, paper £9.95; $45.00, paper $15.95.

"What are you doing after the orgy?" a man whispers to one of the girls making a porno film. Change the sex, and this quirky diary by a Nanterre ex-prof. of sociology could be a Cocteau notebook, dazzling with dubious profundity, tainted by pop culture, but continually entertaining, like Gallic table-talk.

Dictionary of Riddles. By MARK BRYANT. Routledge, £16.99.

Once magic, then recreation, now mostly juvenile, riddles have a long history, as shown by Bryant, and *may* amuse. Nothing *matches* his scholarship. If you can stand 350 pages of that sort of thing, mostly in leaden rhyme, this dictionary is your meat. If not, stick to crossword puzzles.

Cervantes. By JEAN CANAVAGGIO. Translated by J. R. JONES. Norton, £17.95, $30.00.

Amazingly, no really reliable biography has appeared since 1913, despite the huge, seven-volume, partisan work of Luis Astrana Marin (1948-58). Professor Canavaggio brilliantly winnows fact from fiction but also boldy conjectures from the works. Perhaps it would be too much to ask him to quote Chesterton's "Lepanto" with its eloquent *aperçu*.

Tom Stoppard: The Moral Vision of the Major Plays. By PAUL DELANEY. Macmillan, £35.00.

Humanist as well as humorist, engaging but also *engagé*, politic but not party-political, more meta- than physical: this roughly summarises Professor Delaney's line on Stoppard, and Stoppard's on himself. All-embracing bibliography includes even an R.M. radio interview: but don't let's forget the wit that hones the ethics.

The Faber Companion to 20th-Century Popular Music. By PHIL HARDY and DAVE LANG. Faber, £20.00.

Mammoth 875-page compilation, from Abba to ZZ Top, but including jazz and big-band musicians as well as ephemeral and other pop stars. Barely judgmental, it documents and describes more than it explicitly discriminates. Odd omissions include Paul Desmond, Carroll Gibbons, Ivy Benson, and Charles Trenet (Piaf's in).

Selected Prose of Louis MacNeice. Edited by ALAN HEUSER. Clarendon Press, Oxford, £25.00.

Warmer companion-piece to the editor's previous selection of MacNeice's literary criticism, with more personal and mundane matters, travel notes, quick reactions, off-the-cuff judgments, reminiscences, etc. A fascinating bed book, with an exhaustive bibliography and notes which only occasionally over-explain.

Plotting Peace: The Owl's Reply to Hawks and Doves. By RONALD HIGGINS. Brassey's, £17.95, $24.95.

The subtitle sounds dated, but events have made Higgins's ideas for East-West defence cooperation timelier, and worth debate. Like "hawks" he doesn't discount the danger of an East-West crisis. Like "doves", he adds North-South and Greenery to his agenda. But he says little of the Far and Middle East, flashpoints both.

Heros and Villains: Selected Essays. By R. W. JOHNSON. Harvester Wheatsheaf, £25.00, $40.00.

Combative, stimulating stuff, its biggest single source the *London Review of Books*, where Johnson's moderate, literate Leftism seems most at home. Like many *LRB* reviews, these pieces are really essays: French and other politicos, rival commentators, spies, South Africa—Mark Boxer's Stringalongs aren't far away.

Auden's Apologies for Poetry. By LUCY MCDIARMID. Princeton University Press, $24.95.

Interesting, highly controversial thesis: that once in America Auden turned from criticising society to criticising art, and to cutting poetry down to size as frivolous, vain, and guilty. His return to Anglicanism (taking seriously the sermon in *The Dog Beneath the Skin*) supports this: but he was always an inverted Romantic, no?

Our Theatres in the Eighties. By SHERIDAN MORLEY. Hodder & Stoughton, £16.95.

Never less than vivid and interesting, seldom more than brilliant snapshots, these collected reviews don't quite match the drive and glitter of, say, Kenneth Tynan's *He that Plays the King*, but equal his later compilations. This is blink-and-you-miss-it reporting; but its judgments are sound enough to merit more.

Wings of a Man's Life. By S. GORLEY PUTT. Claridge Press, £16.95.

Unusual, varied memoirs by a Devonian son of a naval family who gravitated via the BBC and wartime Bletchley to a return berth in Cambridge, whose luminaries of the past he recalls with acuity and nostalgia. He includes some of his adroit poems, plus greyish photographs. Loneliness and stoicism prevail and struggle.

The Flutes of Dionysus: Daemonic Enthrallment in Literature. By R. D. STOCK. University of Nebraska Press, $42.50, £40.40.

Professor Stock begins with classical Greece and ends with William Golding. Had he included cinema, he might have found more obvious examples: but terror is more powerful in allusive words. The most interesting section is on "The Dark Side of Romanticism", before playful self-consciousness set in. In an M. R. James story, he'd be haunted.

Edwin Drood: Antichrist in the Cathedral. By JOHN THACKER. Vision Press, £18.95.

An example Professor Stock omits: Dickens's unfinished murder story, with the Cathedral as prominent as the prison in *Little Dorrit* or the river in *Our Mutual Friend*. An ingenious study to be collated with the various attempts to complete the book—blacker in overall mood than any others of the canon, and understandably so.

Envisioning Information. By EDWARD R. TUFTE. Graphics Press (PO Box 8, Godalming, Surrey, GU7 3HB), £30.00, $48.00.

Staggeringly beautiful, ingenious, and scholarly compendium on how to present statistical data accurately and comprehensibly in visual form. Using colour as well as design, the book also sheds light on pure aesthetics; but its elegant clarity makes it indispensable for professionals.

A Brief History of Blasphemy. By RICHARD WEBSTER. Orwell Press, £3.95.

Well-meaning but ultimately soft analysis of the Rushdie affair, mainly arguing that agnostic liberals should be more careful of believers' feelings, especially since society bans racist incitement. But what if believers were to be less insecure, touchy, and murderous? Why not chill pills all round?

R.M.

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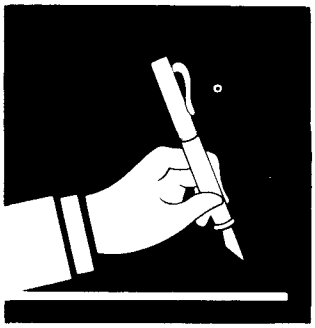
MEMOIR

Remembering the Congress for Cultural Freedom

By EDWARD SHILS

"I'd do it again, I assure you. . . ."
George Bernard Shaw, YOU NEVER CAN TELL (1931)

1. Decades of a Grand Illusion



THE BELIEF that "the noble experiment" undertaken by the Soviet Union was by and large the model which all societies should follow for the benefit of the human race has been one of the most tenacious and widely accepted beliefs of the educated classes through most of the 20th century. Although in outer form much transformed, that belief in the essential vision is still very strong.

October 1917 was a watershed for the literary men and women who interested themselves in politics. Vaguely anarchistic, collectivistic liberal and socialistic ideas were brought into sharper focus by the Bolshevik accession to control over the Russian Empire. Some of the values alleged to be realised in the Soviet régime had long been espoused by middle-class bohemians in Europe and the United States. In the years immediately after 1917, these views spread to the members of literary and artistic classes who, heretofore, had ostensibly little political interest. Then, after the Second World War, it seeped into the academic world, making its way through the social sciences and humanities and the more theoretical and less technological subjects. The increased size of the broadcasting and journalistic stratum and the change in the character and background of journalists, increasingly recruited from university graduates, gave more resonance to this belief. Then it seeped here and there into the class of politicians in the United States. In Europe, with its long tradition of social democracy, there was both resistance to its spread and a fostering sense of kinship—indeed an admiration, willing and grudging, for the determination of the Bolsheviks to institute a socialist society. Even where the Soviet Union was recognised as an imperfect realisation of a high ideal, it was still regarded as a pole of virtue.

Never since the expansion of Islam, which expanded first by military force and then won converts among the conquered, did an ideology ever triumph on such a scale and so speedily. Christianity never advanced as rapidly among Greek and Roman intellectuals in the Roman Empire as did the Soviet version of Marxism among Western European and American intellectuals. It did so without the force of arms and without the coercive power of the state. Naturally, where it had those devices available to it, it tried to saturate the entire society, from the cradle to the grave, from the kitchen to the university and the church.

The Second World War advanced its cause greatly among intellectuals in all countries outside the Soviet Union. The governments and the strata of the population which have to work for their livelihood—the workers of hand, not the workers of brain—resisted it; but even there, not unqualifiedly. Communism did have support from working men but there was also patriotic rejection. The workers were less sophisticated than the intellectuals. They did not have such a capacity for differentiated views as did the educated classes; they also had more common sense. The working classes were not susceptible to "fellow-travelling", although they were subject to the machinations of Communists in the trade union movements. The proneness of the intellectuals to fellow-travelling was aided very effectively by direct Communist manipulations.

WHAT DID THIS great collective act of unreason consist of? It was very simple: it was a belief that the Soviet Union, and other Communist societies under its inspiration and dominion, represented the closest approximation to an ideal society such as had never existed.

The Communist régimes had taken the great step of establishing social ownership of the instruments of production and therewith destroyed the foundation of society based on domination by the avaricious property-owning class. In so doing, it had eliminated the sources of intellectual error and of injustice in society. In eliminating class conflict, it estab-

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lished "the dictatorship of the proletariat", under the leadership of the Communist Party. The proletariat was the chief, the largest, and the most progressive sector of society. The proletariat entrusted the task of ruling society to the Communist Party, which did so with unfaltering consecration to its responsibility of instituting and maintaining a completely socialistic society. The objective was to provide for material plenitude through economic planning, by an omniscient, omniprovident, omnipotent government completely controlled by the Communist Party. Justice and plenitude went hand-in-hand towards full realisation. This society was, according to the account which it gave of itself and which was propagated throughout the world by its agents, paid and voluntary, a thoroughly free, prosperous and just society. Everyone therefore was, according to its own testimony, free in his collective self-discipline; and everyone worked in selfless solidarity towards this goal of progressive mankind. At the height of possession by this phantasm, it was thought that artists and writers in the Soviet Union and other Communist countries were at liberty to create in accordance with their talents, which were released from the crippling restraints imposed on their fellows in capitalist countries. Scientists and scholars were likewise free to reach hitherto unattained heights of human genius.

Evil was expelled from the world in which Communism had triumphed, but only through the vigilance of the leaders of the Communist Parties, since the capitalistic, imperialistic enemies of the working class never slept. They were incessantly seeking to find weaklings, contrary spirits, and mischief-makers in the Communist societies and to manipulate them into deeds of sabotage and terrorism. There were also remnants of the archaic classes who endangered the great experiment. It was therefore necessary from time to time to uproot these iniquitous "elements". The uprooting was perforce harsh but it was always deserved and just.

Prepared to defend these achievements by force of arms, Communist society was nevertheless a peaceful society, both internally and externally. It depended on peace for its progress and its progress was necessary for peace. However, because it existed in a world of hostile, anti-Communist societies, which were based on the exploitation of the poor by the rich, whose existence was made possible through the private ownership of the instruments of production, Communism, devoted though it was to peace, had to be prepared for war. The unjust capitalistic societies, founded on exploitation, were necessarily irreconcilable, never-resting enemies of the progressive and peace-loving Communist society, the example of which was an inspiration to the exploited classes who hungered after justice and plenitude and were prevented from having them. The exploitative capitalistic societies hated peace and they sought war, both to make their doomed economies profitable and to destroy the Communist society that foreshadowed the future which the capitalistic societies wished to prevent.

These utterly and obviously wrong-headed views about the Soviet Union and the bourgeois world which surrounded it, in varying shades and degrees of differentiation and ramification, dominated the political and cultural outlook of a large part of the intellectual classes of Western liberal-democratic societies. The same belief gained adherents in the intellectual classes of the societies of Asia and Latin America and in the more recently emergent intellectual classes of Black Africa.

It was clear from the 1920s onward that these views were false from top to bottom; but their falsity did not prevent them from finding a wide and fervent acceptance among intellectuals. Their spread was momentarily impeded by "the Moscow Trials" of 1936-38 and the Ribbentrop-Molotov Agreement of 1939. From 1941 and throughout the 1940s and the 1950s, the lost ground was made up and the expansion came in full flood.

The two main themes in this ideology were the almost unblemished excellence of the Communist societies, which after 1945 embraced China and "the peoples' democracies" of Eastern Europe, and the unredeemable wickedness of bourgeois societies. Minor imperfections which appeared from time to time in the Communist societies were the consequences of the corruption of certain individuals in conspiracy with the reactionary powers which wished to destroy Communist societies. The only bright spots within the imperialistic societies themselves were their "progressive forces"—their Communist parties, their progressive intellectuals (albeit "petty-bourgeois" in origin), and their Communist trade-union leaders who had taken as their task the disclosure, denunciation and frustration of the efforts of the imperialists to destroy Communism and to perpetuate capitalistic exploitation.

The five years after the Second World War were a period of great activity by the propagators of this nonsense which found such an eager reception. The truth of these beliefs about Communism seemed self-evident to those who were addicted to them.

In addition, there were enticements offered. In Cambridge in the mid-1920s the shy Philip Spratt joined the Communist Party because he had heard that it was easier to meet young women in the Party. In Philadelphia in 1931, a young woman was in such a state of possession that she and her husband emigrated to the Soviet Union and were never heard of again. But before her departure, in the euphoric state of those years, she tried to persuade me that if I were to join the Communist Party I could have anything I wrote published without difficulty. I had no unpublished manuscripts, so I did not yield to her proposal.

The falsity of these contentions about the Soviet Union has now been acknowledged by Mikhail Gorbachov. But in the days of their glory, their truth was taken as self-evident and anyone who contested them was denounced as an enemy of progress. Today, it might seem to persons who did not live in those decades of grand illusion that there was no credible need for the resistance of a handful of individuals, scattered over many countries, to the diffusion of these fateful views.

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2. Enemies & Defenders of Intellectual Freedom

THE CONGRESS FOR CULTURAL FREEDOM took as its main task the assertion of the value of intellectual and artistic freedom at at time when, in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and China, these did not exist. Indeed, any effort to speak truthfully in the face of the governmentally and politically imposed orthodoxy in the Communist countries was severely punished: by dismissals from employment, refusals of employment or appointment, by imprisonment, by psychiatric misclassification and pharmacological manipulation, by abusive denunciation by governments and by associations of intellectuals and scholars officially promoted by governments, and by the refusal of publication. These were the common fate of those who denied the official view in the Communist countries. The conference in Berlin in June 1950, from which the Congress for Cultural Freedom arose, was a protest against the Communist dragooning of intellectuals in the societies they ruled. The formation of the Congress for Cultural Freedom was an act of solidarity with the intellectual victims of the repressive imposition of Communism and "people's democracy". It was also an address to the intellectuals of Western countries to remove the blinders from their eyes and to see the Communist societies as they really were.

The numerous occurrences of the suppression of the freedom of intellectuals by Communist governments were vehemently denied by many Western intellectuals, by no means all of whom were affiliated with associations which were financially supported by the Communist Parties as well as instigated and guided by them. Many of those who were not members of these associations were ready to believe the falsehoods of those who were. Many of these intellectuals regarded themselves as liberals and as democrats or—as some of them would have had it—social democrats. Nevertheless, they did not want to believe that Communism was a morally indefensible mode of governing society, any more than they were willing to believe that liberal democracy as practised in the West had some recognisable merits.

Those who opposed Communist allegations about the state of intellectual and artistic freedom in the Communist countries—and who rejected the claims about economic and social well-being in those countries—were denounced by these large groups of enlightened, rationalistic Western intellectuals. In the United States, the latter called themselves "liberals". This has given liberalism a bad name from which it has not recovered. After the death of Stalin and especially after the first Soviet propaganda about *détente*—quickly taken up by *Le Monde*—became effective among many progressive Western intellectuals, opponents of this propaganda were called "McCarthyites" and "cold warriors". These were even greater condemnations than being called "anti-Communist". To be a "cold warrior" meant that one was opposed to "peace". To be a "cold warrior" was to be an enemy of understanding among the peoples and an obstructor of *détente*. From 1945 onward, "anti-Communists" and "cold warriors" were reviled as liars, as reactionaries, as enemies of good relations between the peoples, as enemies of social justice and freedom. The Communists and their fellow-travellers and collectivistic liberals had made themselves into the monopolists of "peace". All who were not in their camp were *ipso facto* "war-mongers".

This was the situation in which the Congress for Cultural Freedom came into existence. It was very unpopular. Its publications were treated scornfully. ENCOUNTER was shunned and disparaged; *Preuves* even more so. These were excellent periodicals—particularly ENCOUNTER, which, in the face of much distrust, established itself by its superiority in quality to any other English-language periodical—and they never had a less than hard row to hoe. *Preuves* never found proper recognition, despite the high intellectual quality of many of its articles. *China Quarterly* and *Survey*—although they were the only journals providing solid and reliable information about Communist China and the European Communist countries, and were read by scholars who could not dispense with the information which they presented—were also derogated. In India *Quest* was in the same situation.

THE MERE EXISTENCE of the Congress, with its conferences, seminars and publications, was a standing accusation against the falsehoods propagated with dogmatic conviction and uncomfortable half-heartedness by intellectuals who knew with half their minds that what the Congress said was true. They would, however, not admit it, because they regarded the Soviet Union as the touchstone of justice and of the progress of mankind. It was against this combination that the Congress had to contend.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom persisted against this resistance until it came to its demise as a result of the disclosure that for about one-and-a-half decades its financial resources came from the United States Central Intelligence Agency. This happened in 1966 and 1967. The Congress floundered on for about a dozen years, under a somewhat altered name; and in 1979 it finally ceased to exist. Its last years were inglorious. The spirit and convictions of the Congress for Cultural Freedom faded away under its new name.

3. A League against Intellectual Waywardness

PETER COLEMAN HAS NOW written a history and assessment of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, *The Liberal Conspiracy*.[1] Mr Coleman is an Australian barrister, journalist, and politician. He was, until recently, the editor of *Quadrant* (a monthly published by the Australian Committee for Cultural Freedom). He was a student at the London School of Economics, where he wrote a very sensible thesis on Georges Sorel in the early 1950s—he was a

[1] *The Liberal Conspiracy: The Congress for Cultural Freedom and the Struggle for the Mind of Post-war Europe.* By PETER COLEMAN. The Free Press, Macmillan (New York), $22.95.

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pupil there of Professor Michael Oakeshott. He later became a member of the Australian Parliament, and the administrator of Norfolk Island (famous for its being the last place of the settlement of the mutineers of HMS *Bounty*). Mr Coleman has lived most of his life in Australia but he is very well acquainted with the main currents of modern European intellectual life; he is also the author of a fine book on James MacAuley.

Peter Coleman has studied the archives of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, now mostly in the Special Collections Department of the University of Chicago Library; he has also worked through other collections of unpublished papers. He has interviewed practically all the surviving members of the Congress; he was fortunate enough to be able to interview before their deaths in Paris both Raymond Aron and Manès Sperber. His book is a sober, matter-of-fact piece of work, free of special pleading. He does not gloss over the deficiencies of the Congress, but he is also free of any traces of the desire to tell tales out of school. His book is as good a book as could be written on this tentacular organisation by one who was not a member and who had little direct contact with it during its active lifetime.

It is not my intention here to write a review of Mr Coleman's book. It is rather to assess the Congress's conception of its tasks and its achievements as I see them, and to add to Mr Coleman's account a few recollections of my own to fill out the very fair but inevitably incomplete picture which he presents. I do not think that anything which I can add changes the main lines of Mr Coleman's presentation, and there is no important point on which I wish to correct his account. Furthermore, Mr Coleman tells many things about the Congress which I did not know before, since I came into connection with it only in 1953. But in the period from 1955 to almost the end, I was fairly near the centre of some of its activities. I wish also to tell more than he does of the later years of the Congress after Michael Josselson's resignation, and its subsequent half-life as the International Association for Cultural Freedom under its two directors, Messrs Shepard Stone and Adam Watson.

THE CONGRESS for Cultural Freedom stands in a tradition of intellectuals of a common outlook joined together in a common task—it is a product of the 18th-century Enlightenment. I think that it is not wrong to see its forerunners in the circle which produced the *Encyclopédie*. The Philosophical Radicals, inspired by Jeremy Bentham and driven by James Mill, as an informal group of intellectuals banded together for a common purpose, were also forerunners; but I think that the Congress was unaware of that precedent and affinity.

Jules Romains's idea of *les hommes de bonne volonté*, inspired in part by his *unanimiste* ideas which were the common outlook of the group located at l'Abbaye, was another forerunner of the idea which ultimately came to be embodied in the Congress for Cultural Freedom. After the First World War, this idea, without the metaphysical sociology of l'Abbaye, reappeared in H. G. Wells's idea of "the open conspiracy". Peter Coleman entitles his book *The Liberal Conspiracy*, but he does not mention the similarity with H. G. Wells's idea.

In France, the tradition which had reappeared in the declaration of the intellectuals in support of Émile Zola's *J'accuse* and which was given an institutional form in the *Ligue des droit des hommes*, was taken over by Henri Barbusse into the circle of intellectual association called the *Clarté*. *Clarté* moved in a Communist direction. From the formation of *Clarté* until the efforts of Sidney Hook and the later formation of the Congress of Cultural Freedom in which Hook was so important, the European practice of collective declarations and large conferences of intellectuals was the property of the Communists.

THIS IDEA OF intellectuals in joint collective manifestations had been taken up in Russia even before 1917. The first great "step forward" in this kind of activity was undertaken by the Communist Party in the Soviet Union through its *filiale*, the Communist International, in the early 1930s. In these matters, the guiding genius was Willi Münzenberg, the head of the Agitprop department of the Communist International. The greatest of these undertakings was the "First International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture", held in Paris in June 1935. The formation of "John Reed Clubs" in the United States and similar associations on a smaller scale in Britain were all parts of Münzenberg's skill and imagination as an organiser. It may be said that Münzenberg invented the phenomenon of the organised fellow-traveller.

Münzenberg was killed or committed suicide in 1940, when he was trying to flee from France before the advancing German armed forces. He had already been expelled from the German Communist Party in exile and denounced as "an agent of imperialism" earlier in the 1930s, but the lessons which he taught were not forgotten by the Party which disowned and vilified him. The Congress of Writers held in East Berlin in 1947 at which the bearded stripling Melvin Lasky spoke out with such challenging boldness, and the Writers' Conference at Wroclaw (Breslau) in the next year were stages in a worldwide campaign.

Across the Atlantic, Communists and their intellectual allies were no less active. They organised an "international" peace conference at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York in March 1949, attended by numerous American literary men and women (and a large delegation from the Soviet Union as well as leading Communist writers from other countries). It was followed by another even larger "World Peace Congress" in Paris in April 1949.

The huge congress organised in Berlin in 1950 by Arthur Koestler, Melvin Lasky, and Irving Brown was a very deliberate reply to these Communist creations in the spirit of the disavowed Münzenberg. It was held in West Berlin, just emerging from the blockade which the American air lift had frustrated in 1948. The mayor of Berlin, Ernst Reuter, was a great helper. Arthur Koestler had worked for Münzenberg in Paris for five years during the 1930s. Although Koestler was a genius in his own right, his idea of how to counter the

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Münzenbergian campaigns of the Communists was in the same pattern as his former master's. Before Koestler applied his extraordinary energy in the organisation of the Congress in Berlin, Melvin Lasky already had such an idea in mind when he met with Ruth Fischer and Franz Borkenau in Frankfurt in August 1949. (Both Fischer and Borkenau were former Communists—Ruth Fischer a leading member of the German Communist Party, and Borkenau a functionary of the Communist International; Borkenau was also a scholar of considerable distinction.)

A small group of American intellectuals, led mainly by Sidney Hook who was indignant about the mendacity of assertions of the prevalence of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union and the equal mendacity of denials of its suppression, was appalled by the Soviet Union's pretended monopoly of good will and love of peace. They formed an association called "Americans for Intellectual Freedom". Sidney Hook was a major figure in this effort. The objective was to resist and nullify the actions of the Communist organisation of intellectuals which was falsifying the actual situation in the Soviet Union, especially with respect to the freedom of literary and artistic expression, and in making it appear that the Soviet Union in its foreign policy was interested only in peace while all other countries were "warmongers" or "the running dogs" of the imperialistic oppression imposed by the United States.

In 1950, after the Congress in West Berlin in which, with characteristic courage and indignation, he took a prominent place, Hook and a number of American intellectuals formed the American Committee for Cultural Freedom. The focus on "cultural" or "intellectual" freedom was an idea of Sidney Hook. In large measure, that idea set the terms of reference of the Congress for Cultural Freedom for most of the rest of its existence.

THERE WAS A CERTAIN SYMMETRY between the Communist mode of associating intellectuals on behalf of the Soviet Union and the mode of association of intellectuals adopted by the anti-Communists. There was, however, a major difference. The tradition of Willi Münzenberg was more than a pattern of organisation; it was also a tradition of carrying out instructions from the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and the Communist International. The Congress for Cultural Freedom, in contrast, like the American Committee for Cultural Freedom, took no instructions from anyone outside their respective organisation. (I emphasise this, in view of the fact that the Congress for Cultural Freedom received financial support from the Central Intelligence Agency.)

The Congress for Cultural Freedom was in fact a congress for the defence of cultural freedom. It was, from the beginning, a response to the aggressive, expansive spirit of Münzenberg and the tradition which he left behind. Arthur Koestler, in his eloquent closing address in Berlin in 1950, cried out, "*Die Freiheit hat die Offensive ergriffen*"; but that was not in point of fact true. "Freedom has been aroused to self-defence" would have been a more accurate statement of what had happened at the first congress in June 1950.

The Congress did not intend to overthrow the Soviet régime or the peoples' democracies. Such ideas might not have been far from Sidney Hook's ideas and those of others (like James Burnham) who wished the Congress to take a more aggressive attitude towards the Soviet Union. Some critics thought—and some still think—that the Congress failed because it was not more political and more aggressive, although just what such efforts could have amounted to they did not say.

THE CONGRESS did make a few modest efforts to reach into the Soviet Union and the Communist countries. The main effort was a meeting with editors of Soviet literary periodicals in which an "exchange of articles" was proposed. The initiative came from the Congress; the Russians agreed but, in the end, they did not carry out their part of the agreement. A more sustained activity—it still goes on—was the programme *of Entr'aide intellectuelle Européenne*, directed by Konstantin Jelenski and Pierre Emmanuel, with the aid of Mlle Rosalyn Chenu, and still carried on by Mme Annette Laborey. The aid took the form of receiving requests for particular books and journals from authors and librarians in Communist countries—mainly Poland and Hungary—and filling them. (The Congress sent no unsolicited books, only such as were specifically requested.) This, I think was the extent of the Congress's attempts to overthrow the Communist régimes.

Nor did the Congress attempt to win over fellow-travellers in the West. After an early proposal to invite Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, and Thomas Mann to participate in some activity of the Congress was rejected, the Congress did not attempt to treat directly with the prominent intellectual friends of Communism.

It was not the policy of the Congress to throw a burning brand into the enemy's camp. It was also not its intention to address an audience of the converted. The audience which it aimed to reach through its conferences and seminars and reviews was the large part of the intellectual stratum which, although somewhat biased in favour of the Communists, was not rigidly attached to Communist organisations and beliefs. This was a very broad band. It was this band which the Communists and their most active coadjutors were seeking to attach to themselves as "fellow-travellers". They did not call them "fellow-travellers", they called them "progressive forces". There were also many intellectuals, slighter in their collectivistic bias than the "progressive forces", perhaps more open-minded, more willing to see the damage which Communism was doing to political and intellectual life, but not yet ready to render a negative judgment because they were inclined to be sympathetic to any idealistic collectivistic tendencies away from capitalistic society. These were the intellectuals at whom the Congress addressed its publications and its gatherings.

Since I have called attention to the relationship, by "oppositional imitation", of the Congress to the achievements of Willi Münzenberg on behalf of Communism, I must all the more underscore the enormous difference.

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Here Münzenberg was no better than Goebbels in his readiness to tell untruths. Although he was a Communist down to the soles of his feet, he was also an intelligent man and he knew that much of what he said was untruthful—untruthful on behalf of the cause for which he lived, but still untruthful. This was at the other extreme from the attitude of the Congress. I can say that except for one lone occasion, when I remonstrated with Mr John Hunt, a Congress official in Paris, about the probable poor intellectual quality of a proposed publication of the Congress in the Middle East, and he said something to the effect that "intellectual quality" can wait, the important thing was to "get the journal going", I never heard any expression of indifference to intellectual quality. (As I shall tell later, Michael Josselson, although he had a *faiblesse* for "big names", never wished to associate with the Congress "big names" who had no intellectual or literary distinction.)

This emphasis on intellectual quality was of a piece with the matter-of-factness and sobriety of the Congress in the discourse which it attempted to foster in its assemblies and publications. The papers which were presented at those conferences were usually factual and rational. Its journals were so informative and well argued that many detractors of the Congress, many "anti-anti-Communists", read them regularly, because the information and insight they conveyed were not obtainable in other journals.

THE AIM of the Congress, therefore, was to keep alive the ideal of the rational and truthful understanding of the contemporary world. It was quite rightly horrified by the cruelties of the Communist régimes as seen in their most dreadful light in the "purges" of the 1930s in the Soviet Union, in the similar "trials" in Hungary and Czechoslovakia in the first post-War decade of the "peoples' democracies", and in the Soviet military interventions in East Berlin in 1953 and in Hungary in 1956. These, however, were only exceptional dramatic episodes.

The dominant and continuous feature of the Communist régimes had been the obliteration of intellectual and political freedom and the suppression of the truth. This was the main object of the Congress's attention. The sterility of the Communist economic system did not engage the interest of the Congress as much as the untruths which Communists and their associated intellectuals in the West told about it. It was not economic planning in Communist countries which preoccupied it—it was the falsehoods being told and believed in Western countries among intellectuals about the alleged fruits of central planning. It was not even "collectivised agriculture" and its disastrous effect on the peoples of the Soviet Union which preoccupied the Congress, it was rather the myths which were propagated about it, and their acceptance by large parts of the intellectual classes in many countries. It was not only the shoddiness and scarcity of goods and services and the inequalities of Communist societies which aroused our antipathy but the lies and the endorsement of lies which alleged the contrary.

The point which I wish to make here is that the major interest of the Congress was the protection of intellectual integrity. It was anti-Communist because the Communist régimes and the Communist doctrine and agitation were the greatest threats to intellectual integrity. Intellectual integrity required intellectual freedom. The critics of the Congress naturally would be incapable of seeing that, and they would have been unwilling to do so even if they had been capable of it. Even the members of the Congress were not always as aware of it as they might have been. The few forays which the Congress made into anti-Communist politics (and the desire of my two dear friends Sidney Hook and Minoo Masani that the Congress should be "more political") were for something rather different from that.

THE GREAT EFFORT was to strengthen the determination to adhere to the elementary rules of intellectual conduct. Respect for truth based on observation and study—rational analysis of experience and observation, freedom in making up one's mind free from stereotypical images—was what the Congress tried to practise. One of the modes of strengthening this commitment to intellectual integrity was to bring individuals so committed into contact with and awareness of each other. It was necessary to overcome their sense of isolation from other persons with the same standards and the same intellectual interests. In that way, their convictions could be reinforced; their susceptibility to Communist and fellow-travelling deception could be reduced.

All of the work done by the Congress by its international and intercontinental conferences and seminars, in Europe, the Americas, Africa and Asia was aimed at that objective.

That was why I proposed, in several papers which I sent to Michael Josselson, that our task should be conceived as the formation of an intellectual community, cutting across the boundaries of nationality, religion, race, political affiliation and academic specialisation. It was a programme of forming an international community of men and women of good will and intellectual integrity, of honesty and of respect for the facts of life and for reason. It was a matter of fortifying those intellectuals who suffered in isolation, particularly in Africa and parts of Asia, but also in the West. The programme was intended to revive and strengthen those dispositions which already inclined in the directions opened by intellectual freedom but which, if left in isolation, withered through lack of exercise. Persons who lived in political and cultural isolation underwent a withering of their discriminatory intellectual powers. They became susceptible to the infections of Communism in its various fellow-travelling forms.

Of course, this intention is antithetical to the Communist conception of intellectual activity and to the dogmatic Marxist, Leninist and Stalinist subjugation of intellectuals for the sake of maintaining a dictatorial régime. A régime which wishes to rule without opposition or criticism—and to pervade every corner of society with a doctrine which justifies such suppression—is incompatible with the conception of intellectual integrity and the freedom for its practice we espoused.

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A body like the Congress, with its conception of a free intellectual life, had of necessity to oppose Communism. How could it have been otherwise in a world in which the suppression of intellectual liberties was a decisive feature of Communist societies where such practices were being abusively denied, and which were being justified by increasingly large parts of the intellectual strata of liberal-democratic societies?

However, the concern of the Congress was not just to construct a union of men of moral and intellectual goodwill. It was also to prevent men of moral and intellectual ill-will from spreading their influence and dominating the intellectual and public life of the liberal democracies and of those societies which still had some chance of becoming liberal democracies. The Congress for Cultural Freedom was, therefore, anti-Communist because the Communists and their accomplices and their dupes were infecting the intellectual and public life of their societies, misleading them by their false accounts of both Communist societies and liberal-democratic societies.

4. *The Objective*

PETER COLEMAN in the choice of the title for his book, *The Liberal Conspiracy*, hits off half of the truth very well. It was "liberal". But I should say that "conspiracy" is not the right word. Conspiracy means secrecy. The only secret which the Congress had was the flow of funds from the Central Intelligence Agency. This was the secret of Michael Josselson and perhaps a few others; it was a secret about money, not objectives. With that exception, the participants in the activities of the Congress had no secrets. The aim of the Congress was open and its own.

Coleman repeatedly speaks of "the non-Communist Left" in order to characterise the outlook of the Congress and its associates as well as its intended audience. I think that overstates the collectivistic element in the beliefs represented. Others have spoken of "liberal anti-Communism" as the outlook of the Congress supporters and its audience. This gives primacy to a negative intention, and I do not quite agree with these designations. It is not that they are incorrect; it is rather that they do not really point to the more important characteristic of those who set out to save the régime of intellectual freedom. It was intellectual liberty, not anti-Communism, which was the crucial interest of the Congress.

There were certainly many social democrats and earnest collectivistic liberals who (although believing that socialism and governmental regulation are conducive to the well-being of society) were genuinely liberal as far as intellectual freedom was concerned. They differed from the collectivistic liberals who were drawn into the flock of fellow-travellers because they took liberty seriously while the fellow-travelling liberals did not. If "Left" is taken to mean the espousal of some form of collectivism, then there is some truth in that; but there were other liberals in the Congress who were not "collectivistic". It must at the same time be admitted that the collectivistic liberals outnumbered the individualistic, traditional, and constitutional liberals, among whom I would place Raymond Aron, Irving Kristol, Bertrand de Jouvenel, and myself.

To call them "the non-Communist Left" conveys overtones of the excited zeal which Professor Hugh Trevor-Roper saw in Arthur Koestler and in some of the other major participants at the first conference of the Congress in Berlin in 1950. Arthur Koestler was a great man, a writer of formidable courage and intelligence and eloquence whose *Darkness at Noon* is one of the most notable literary achievements of the 20th century; but no one who knew him even slightly would deny that he was given to running to extremes. Arthur Koestler could be impassioned about almost anything but, as his closing address to the meeting in West Berlin in 1950 made absolutely clear, it was freedom which was the decisive issue. (I would go further and say: intellectual freedom.)

The term "anti-Communist" is a poor one. It obscures important differences. Fellow-travellers and their Communist father-confessors and moral counsellors always tried to make it appear that an attitude of disapproval toward the Communist régime was tantamount to preparation for the conduct of a war against Eastern Europe and beyond. There is an overtone of negativism in the term "anti-Communism" which I think does injustice to the outlook of the Congress. I think that our anti-Communism was very specifically oriented towards the safeguarding of intellectual integrity and its required freedom. Curbing and reducing the impact of Communist and fellow-travelling views among Western intellectuals and demonstrating their falsity was a necessary means to that end. The Communist and fellow-travelling arguments not only justified tyranny; they claimed that the tyranny which they justified was no tyranny at all.

THE CONGRESS WAS, of course, also concerned about the expansion of the power of the Soviet Union and it thought that the expansion of the fellow-travellers' outlook in Western countries was intended to make that easier. It was not just nationality or patriotism which led the adherents to the Congress to seek to stop the spread of Communist beliefs. The Congress for Cultural Freedom was opposed to Communism because Communism, once established, obliterated intellectual and political freedom. It opposed the fellow-travellers of Communism in countries which were still free of Soviet domination because they deliberately or self-deceivingly espoused and propagated lies about the state of affairs in Communist countries, and encouraged intellectual immorality. Naturally, the Congress was opposed to the Communist hatred of the existing civil order in the liberal democracies.

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All these things being said, it should also be admitted that the presence among us of a minority of former Communists, especially in the earlier years, did affect our tone. In any case, without them, the Congress might not have got started.

5. *A Confluence of Traditions*

WHOM COULD the Congress, when it was formed, draw into and hold within its circle? It was largely confined to the reservoir of "the non-Communist Left" or "the liberal anti-Communists". Some of them were former Communists who still retained their critical attitudes towards liberal-democratic capitalistic society; from their experience with their quondam fellow-Communists, they had learned much about the mendacity of Communists, their subversive aspirations and their subservience to the foreign policy of the Kremlin. They knew about the real situation in the Soviet Union, and they were indignant about the dogmatic blindness of fellow-travellers to those facts. Some were former Social-Democrats, or were still Social-Democrats, who retained their affection for a régime of socialism *cum* freedom. The fact that such a combination might be impossible does not diminish the genuineness of their appreciation of these two ideals. They were all opposed to the spread of Communist ideas. Very few of them thought that the Congress should undertake to "overthrow" the Communist régime in the Soviet Union. There was a small number of constitutional, traditional and individualistic liberals who got on amiably with liberal Social-Democrats. There were very few conservative intellectuals among the adherents of the Congress.

The Congress drew to itself ex-Communists like Koestler and socialists like Melvin Lasky and Sidney Hook who had experience of Communists and who had been intelligent enough to see what they were like, or who had also some experience of life in the Soviet Union, or who knew persons who had had such experiences. It could scarcely have been otherwise.

THERE WERE IN FACT rather few eminent conservative intellectuals at the time. In the 1950s, of traditional conservatives, there were perhaps only the "Agrarians" and Dr Russell Kirk in the United States; in Britain there was Professor Michael Oakeshott and T. E. Utley; later, Professor Elie Kedourie came upon the scene (if he may be called a conservative). R. Bassett died early in the 1950s; I never heard his name mentioned in the Congress. Michael Polanyi might be regarded as a conservative with liberal inclinations. I do not know whether the Congress ever attempted to bring Professors Oakeshott and Kedourie or Mr Peregrine Worsthorne into its circle; I think not. Maurice Cowling was still unknown at that time, and later he so hated liberals that he would sooner have died than be buried by a liberal undertaker. Peregrine Worsthorne was very friendly with ENCOUNTER's editors, Irving Kristol and Melvin Lasky, but I do not think that any effort was made to draw him into the circles of the Congress outside London convivial circles. The same is true of Colin Welch. Just as the Congress did not seek the collaboration of conservatives (i.e., persons who place familial, religious and moral traditions at the centre of their image of the world), so it did not, as far as I know, seek the collaboration of individualistic liberals such as Milton Friedman. Friedrich Hayek did attend the conference in Milan in 1955 and apparently thought that it was more inimical to freedom, as he understood it, than otherwise. Americans like Frank Chodorov, Henry Hazlitt, Frank Meyer, John Chamberlain, W. H. Chamberlin and William F. Buckley Jr. were, as far as I know, not included among the persons whom the Congress sought to attract. Perhaps it was thought that they were too abrasive or sectarian, or too divisive, or polemical; perhaps their combination of traditional conservatism and economic individualism was not to the taste of the Congress. I do not know.

It should also be recognised, however that the ideas of individualistic liberalism—now called "neo-conservatism"—were not as prominent in the best years of the Congress as they have become since. It was still a time when most intellectual conservatives were almost as governmentalist as collectivistic liberals. "Butskillism" was the order of the day. Prime Minister Thatcher and President Reagan were still in the wings.

It is possible that the Congress could have found some associates outside the ex-Communist anti-Communists, "the non-Communist Left" or "the non-Communist liberals"; but there were not many. The time had not yet come for the renaissance of the various forms of individualistic, traditional and constitutional liberalism which has occurred since the demise of the Congress.

I THINK IT IS no valid criticism of the Congress for Cultural Freedom that it drew on "the non-Communist Left". There was no one else who had the initiative to create and maintain it. Arthur Koestler, Ruth Fischer, Sidney Hook, Melvin Lasky, Irving Kristol, Manès Sperber *et al.* were all on "the non-Communist Left"; of these, only Melvin Lasky and Irving Kristol had never been Communists or sympathisers with Communism. I do not know what Michael Josselson's political views were before he fled to the Western hemisphere after the German Army conquered France. He never referred to his political views of that period although he told me much that was interesting and amusing about his career as a businessman before the War. (It is not likely that he was either a conservative or an individualistic liberal; he certainly was neither of these in the years that I knew him. I think it would not be unfair to him to surmise that he was a collectivistic liberal before the War.)

In any case, there were very few conservatives to whom to appeal. I think that Raymond Aron and I were, perhaps, the only more or less "conservative" persons in the centre of the Congress, and each of us was a composite of liberalism and conservatism. (I recall that when I presented a paper on "Tradition and Liberty" at Milan in 1955—a paper which spoke of "the sacred element in tradition"—I was taken to task by Daniel Bell. I cannot recall that any of the partici-

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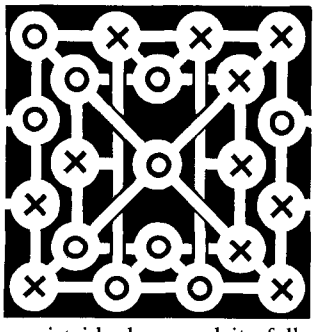
pants in the large hall came to the defence of my mildly conservative argument about the value of tradition.)

All of us were liberals in the sense that we respected and demanded all the traditional liberal arrangements: freedom of the press, freedom of belief, freedom of enquiry, freedom of association and representation, the separation of powers, the rule of law and representative institutions. Those who had experience of Communism, Nazism, and Fascism were anything but insensitive to the value of the institutions of civil society. They were in fact liberals in every respect except with regard to private property. (With regard to private property, they were mostly what I would call "collectivistic liberals".) They certainly were not all socialists, and even the socialists tended to be in favour of a mixed economy. In fact, the organisation of the economy was not of primary interest to many of them. Very few of them knew much about modern economics. Raymond Aron knew a good deal of "political economy"; Professor Arthur W. Lewis was a professional economist, as was Professor Peter Wiles; Colin Clark was a very distinguished pioneer in the study of national income; Professor Peter (now Lord) Bauer was an important economist; Bertrand de Jouvenel also knew a fair amount of economics. But they were in a minority among the adherents of the Congress.

6. *The Congress & the Central Intelligence Agency*



WITHIN THE WIDE BAND OF collectivistic liberalism the spurious sector—the pro-Soviet fellow-travellers—were very much in the forefront in the five years after the Second World War. It required a very powerful will to break out of this consensus of the intellectuals formed around the Communist ideology and its fellow-travelling adaptations.

From the very beginning of the efforts of the members of the Congress, beginning indeed with Melvin Lasky's daring speech at the Writers' Congress in East Berlin in 1947, those who disagreed with the prevailing pro-Soviet views of literary and journalistic intellectuals and increasingly of academic intellectuals, in matters of intellectual or cultural freedom, were regarded as spoilers. It was not the done thing, at that time, to refer to the suppression of intellectual freedom in the Soviet Union or in the other countries where Communism had been imposed by the Red Army. This was long before intellectuals like I. F. Stone (or other contributors to *The New York Review of Books* and *New Statesman*) could establish their *bona fides* as "independent" radicals by making a few passing remarks about a particular infringement of cultural freedom in the Communist countries. In recent years, criticising the state of cultural freedom in the Soviet Union has been put forward as evidence of one's good standing as "a radical"! In the years of the Congress, it was regarded in the wide circles of the dominant collectivistic liberalism as evidence of being "against peace" (or as not "loving peace", as I once heard Professor Joan Robinson put it).

It is hard to disentangle the variety of motives for the hatred of the standpoint represented in Congress activities. More than anything else, I think that it was the sheer attachment of the dominant intellectual faction on the Left to their image of the Soviet régime and their aspiration to make their own societies like it, or even subservient to it. They were not all entirely ignorant that intellectual freedom was suppressed to the point of disappearance in the Communist countries, and they knew that the situation there was not exactly what they were saying it was. The Congress brought their mendacity home to them. That made their dislike of the Congress all the more angry.

I do not mean to say that this was the whole story. Some of the opposition to the Congress came from persons who thought that the Soviet Union, by virtue of the "social ownership of the instruments of production", was sacrosanct, and that any other deficiencies were minor or transient. In addition to this, they just did not like being criticised, quite apart from their attachment to the Soviet Union or their bad conscience about justifying things they knew to be bad. They, therefore, denied that these realities existed at all.

It was, consequently a great moment for these Communists and quasi-Communist ideologists, fellow-travelling publicists and collectivistic liberal intellectuals when, in 1967, it became known that the United States Central Intelligence Agency had, for more than half of the existence of the Congress for Cultural Freedom, been supporting it financially on a large scale. The initial accounts in the *New York Times*, then the article in the *Saturday Evening Post* by Mr Thomas Braden, a former official of the Central Intelligence Agency, then the article in *Ramparts* and, finally, an article by Professor Christopher Lasch in *The Nation* were a vindication for the host of the detractors.

AS I RECALL, none of those who welcomed and propagated the information about the financial role of the Central Intelligence Agency ever allowed themselves to raise the question about whether the Congress for Cultural Freedom had been correct or incorrect in what it said about the obliteration of intellectual freedom in Communist countries.

The moral discredit of the Congress, which they thought the disclosures of its source of financial support had brought on it, was welcomed because they wished to discredit the unwelcome truths which it asserted. The disclosure of the source of financial support was regarded as tantamount to evidence that they should not consider the arguments of the Congress about the state of world affairs. The accumulation of evidence from Anton Ciliga to Alexander Solzhenitzyn (the latter adding to the weight and the persistence, in France, of Raymond Aron's steady restatement, day-in-and-

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day-out, of the truth) had finally begun to break the crust of false good conscience of the *bien-pensant* fellow-travellers. But in the West there was also, by the middle of the 1960s, a growing emancipationist radicalism, a "new Left" which inherited most of the mendacity, without the organisational loyalty, of the "old Left".

The disclosure was, therefore, greeted with jubilation. The disagreeable critics of Communist societies had been brought into disrepute by the open acknowledgment that their Congress had in fact been financed by the Central Intelligence Agency. Nothing more was required for the critics of the Congress to have a good conscience about the state of affairs in Communist countries, about which many of them had a bad conscience which they did not wish to admit to themselves.

The Congress for Cultural Freedom was mortally struck by the reinforcement which its antagonists gained by the reports about its support by the Central Intelligence Agency. However, its crisis was, in my view, more internal than it was external.

THE CRISIS WITHIN showed how false was the antagonistic view of the Congress as a band of "cold warriors" working on behalf of American foreign policy. Had the Congress been a cynical, deliberate instrument of official Washington views, it would not have broken up in the way in which it did. The fact is that the members of the Congress were, most of them, genuine liberals, at least in their commitment to telling the truth in public.

Many of the associates of the Congress were humiliated. Within the staff of the Congress, there was a paralysing embarrassment. The moving spirit of the Congress, Michael Josselson, resigned partly because he was urged to do so by some leading members of the Congress, and perhaps also because he thought that he had, by his solicitation and acceptance of funds from the Central Intelligence Agency, destroyed the confidence of his associates in his moral character. Whatever his relation to the Central Intelligence Agency, there is no doubt that he had worked closely with it. (According to Mr Coleman, Josselson was, from very early on, a salaried employee of the Central Intelligence Agency. He has a reference in his description of Josselson's funeral to the offering of a medal to Josselson's widow by an official of the Agency in acknowledgment of his services.)

Josselson thought himself discredited in the judgment of his colleagues. He was deeply upset, and not just by the loss of confidence which some of his eminent associates had once had in him. He was, I think, more mortified by the fact that he had told untruths to friends who had once raised the question of the relations of the Washington agency with the Congress. He was aware that he had deceived his friends and, in a few cases, damaged their public reputation.

Of all the withdrawals, I thought that those of Raymond Aron and Ignazio Silone were the only ones that were justified. Aron was a figure of world-wide renown, but of great unpopularity among French intellectuals. His position after the death of Albert Camus as the most important intellectual and moral figure in French journalism and academic life—together with Hubert Beuve-Méry, with whom he disagreed on most things except in the practice of the virtue of honesty—and as a critic of the politics of Left-wing intellectuals, had been compromised. He withdrew stormily. I think I recall his slamming the door as he left the room where there was a special meeting of the executive committee of the Congress in the midst of the Paris turmoil. Perhaps the door was blown shut by the wind; I cannot be sure. He was certainly very vexed.

SOME MEMBERS of the guiding circle of the Congress declared that they had been deceived; some of them put on airs of injured innocence. At least one of them made no statements in public but went over to "the other side"; he became, I was told, a patron of the cause of Angela Davis. Some withdrew entirely from the Congress, or increased their distance from it. "The glorious revolution of May 1968" was welcomed at least by Konstantin Jelenski; his motives for doing so were probably a genuine sympathy with young persons, a bohemianism which was always close to the surface, and a desire to reduce his culpability for collaboration with an alleged organ of the Central Intelligence Agency. He espoused the cause of student agitators who were doing damage to universities in Western countries. He did not praise them for the damage which they perpetrated; he only praised their idealism and verve. Pierre Emmanuel was infuriated because he thought he had been manipulated—"*téléguidé*", he called it. But neither he nor Konstantin Jelenski withdrew from the Congress despite their moral chagrin. They were, however, adamantly against the prospect of continuing to serve under the "unlettered philistine" directorship of Shepard Stone, who was to succeed Josselson. It took a long evening of argument on the part of Manès Sperber and myself to persuade them not to desert.

I thought that Stephen Spender's tone of innocence was unjustified. Spender had been very much in the centre of the Congress from its very early days; he surely must have heard rumours, and indeed even circulated them, of the connection between the Congress and "sponsors in Washington". Because of his doubts about its connections, he himself had consulted his friends before he accepted the invitation to become editor of ENCOUNTER. Nicolas Nabokov, who had already separated himself from the Congress to take up another post, later treated the whole episode as if he, although secretary general for a decade, had never actually been a part of the Congress, possibly only a musical advisor. In his autobiography, the Congress appears as something very remote from himself. Nabokov was clearly not the innocent bystander that he wanted to appear to be: he was a great one for gossip, and he was well connected with some very high officials of the United States Department of State. If he did not know the facts, he surely had heard "the rumours" well before 1967.

In October 1955, I heard from Mr A. D. Gorwala in Bombay that the Congress was supported by the Central Intelli-

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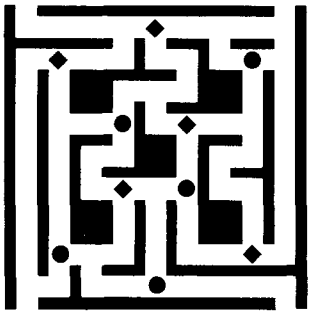
gence Agency. In reply to my enquiry about the source of that rumour, he said that James T. Farrell had told him. I thereupon wrote to Nicolas Nabokov, whom I knew very slightly after the meeting of the Congress in Milan, to tell him what I had heard, and asked him for the truth of the matter. He sent me what purported to be an accountant's report on the financial operations of the New York Farfield Foundation, which subsequently turned out to be an institution fabricated to transmit funds from the Central Intelligence Agency to the Congress. He did not accompany this boring, uninformative, and, as it turned out later, false document, with any denial of the report which I had transmitted to him. That was a rather cynical thing to do; it would have been slightly more honourable to have left the letter unanswered. In any case, he certainly heard of the rumours from me, if from no one else.

SEVERAL YEARS later—it must have been in the early 1960s—Professor Herbert Passin, visiting Chicago, told me that a friend of his employed in the United States Embassy in Paris had, doing what she was clearly not entitled to do, looked into a file drawer in the office of the representative of the Central Intelligence Agency in Paris, and there she saw a document written or otherwise prepared by John Hunt, a high official in the Congress, reporting on Congress affairs directly to the Agency. I do not know whether this is true; Passin himself had not seen the document.

By this time I had become personally close to Michael Josselson—indeed he was to the end one of my closest friends. I wrote to him at once, telling him of what I had heard from Passin. I urged upon him that, if it were true that the Congress was receiving money from the Central Intelligence Agency, it must cease at once to accept such funds, because the disclosure of that relationship would do harm to the Congress and would damage the standing of honourable and brave men like Aron and Silone who stood almost alone in their respective countries at the time. Again, I had no reply from Josselson. However, I think that I received a telegram from him asking me to tell Passin to cease spreading gossip. (I am no long certain whether he sent the telegram directly to Herbert Passin who showed it to me or whether it was sent directly to me. But I do recall holding the telegram in my hand. Perhaps he sent telegrams to both of us.)

I gave some thought to the matter. By that time I had become fairly active in Congress affairs. I had organised the large seminar in Rhodes on "representative government and public liberties in the new states of Asia and Africa", and I had taken responsibility for one of the four major sections of the large conference in Berlin in 1960, in celebration of the tenth anniversary of the founding of the Congress. I was the founder and editor of *Minerva* which was at that time supported financially by the Congress. I had also served as a member of the committee on seminars which had been organised by Professor Daniel Bell as the director of the seminar programmes of the Congress and which included, as members, Raymond Aron, Michael Polanyi, Anthony Crosland, Arthur Lewis, and Bertrand de Jouvenel.

7. *Rumours & Disclosure*



I CONCLUDED FROM MY reflections that there were two things wrong with the acceptance of money from the Central Intelligence Agency. One was its imprudence—it endangered the good name and effectiveness of the Congress and also, which was much more important, the good names of persons like Raymond Aron and Ignazio Silone who were conducting, almost single-handedly, courageous and lonely battles for a liberal and humane standpoint against the solid mass of rancorous and unsparing enemies—Communists, fellow-travellers, *naïfs*, and bad hats. There was, in addition to the endangering of good and brave men and of the worthwhile cause of the Congress, the moral matter of deception of persons who were friends of Michael Josselson. I must confess that I did not think very hard about this particular question. Perhaps I did not mind being deceived by Josselson, since I thought him to be acting in a good cause to which I knew him to be deeply committed. In any case, I have never thought that my friends need always tell me everything they know. The most important thing for me was the deception was not leading me into doing things which I would not have done otherwise. I had not been manipulated into doing things which I would not have otherwise done.

Moreover, having heard the rumours of the support by the Central Intelligence Agency for the Congress did not affect my attitude towards the Congress. I appreciated its objectives. I was confident of the honesty of the participants in those of its activities known to me; and I did not think that contact, even directly, as it must have been in the case of Josselson with his Washington associates, was morally contaminating. I dislike deception, but I do not think that it is the only thing to be taken into account. It is inconsistent to argue for the value of truthfulness while being untruthful. But an untruthful account of the means of livelihood of a person does not in itself impugn the truthfulness of the assertions made by that person about other objects. If I was deceived, it was only regarding the fact that the source of the money was hidden. My disapproval was restricted to that particular fact. I would have been more troubled if I had ever taken instructions from anyone about the activities in which I participated and which I would not have done without those instructions.

That was never the case. No one ever instructed me about what to do or interfered with my plans, invitations, etc. Neither Josselson nor Nabokov, nor any other official of the Congress, ever told me what to do or, except for one instance, suggested even an alternative to what I had done. This exception was a very minor one; it had to do with my invitation to Robert Maynard Hutchins to take the chair at our seminar in Rhodes. On questions of topics to be discussed and persons to be invited, I had an entirely free hand in planning this conference as well as in the planning of my special panel at the meeting in Berlin in 1960. Only once

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were there words between Josselson and myself. These took place in Berlin after, as chairman, I had chided William Phillips for rambling away from a particular point which had engaged the attention of our group up to that time. Phillips walked out of the room in indignation and Josselson, who was always sensitive to the danger of the loss of any eminent friend of the Congress, reproved me. I answered him rather sharply, and that as far as I know was the end of the matter. William Phillips, who still edits *Partisan Review*, tells about his side of the incident in his book of memoirs, but not precisely.

I decided that I was old enough to take responsibility and I did so in good conscience. I had never been asked or urged to act against my convictions; I had never (except for the chairmanship of Hutchins at the seminar in Rhodes) received any criticisms or corrections of what I had done.

The same was true of my editorship of *Minerva*. I had long thought about founding a journal on science policy. I had first thought of it in about 1948 when I had the idea of transforming the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* into a quarterly to be called *Science and Policy*; I had arranged for the appointment of Hyman Goldsmith to teach physics in the College at the University of Chicago and to edit the new journal from there. Eugene Rabinowitch did not agree to the scheme, and it was abandoned. Towards the end of the 1950s, I approached Carroll Bowen, then of the University of Chicago Press, to enquire about the practicability of a journal on cultural policy which would include higher educational and science policy. I thought that Irving Kristol might be the editor. When Bowen told me that the journal would require a subsidy of about $17,000 per annum, I dropped the scheme.

HENCE, WHEN Michael Josselson asked me whether I would be willing to convert the *Bulletin* of the Committee on Science and Freedom of the Congress into a quarterly review, with the financial support of the Congress, I accepted the opportunity. From that time until Josselson's death, with two exceptions, neither Josselson, nor anyone else in the Congress ever suggested an author, or an article. (One exception had to do with Shepard Stone's suggestion that I print an essay by Dr James Perkins about the student disorders. It was a very poor article but once it was completely rewritten, it became fairly respectable. It certainly, in its revised form, did not run contrary to my own views of the events it wrote about; it was in fact very different from what had been originally written. On another occasion, Stone wrote me a reproving letter about something written in *Minerva*. I wrote him in rather strong terms that his remarks were unacceptable to me. He then apologised for intruding into my editorial jurisdiction. I must point out here that Shepard Stone's presidency of the International Association for Cultural Freedom belongs to the period well past the time of the connection with the Central Intelligence Agency.)

I therefore had no reason whatsoever to feel myself manipulated. I also had no reason to worry, because I had nothing to lose. I was too obscure and was not dependent on public favour; I certainly did not fear that I would suffer any damage either at the University of Chicago or at King's College, Cambridge, if it did turn out that the Central Intelligence Agency was, in fact, secretly supplying the financial resources of the Congress. A hare-brained radical named Robert Young (who was a fellow of King's College at the time of the disclosures) wrote a long footnote of scurrilous innuendos against *Minerva*, the Congress, and the Central Intelligence Agency in *Social Studies of Science*; but that was the only printed response that I saw. (No one ever remarked on it to me except for Joseph Ben-David, the excellent sociologist of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who wrote a letter of protest to the journal.)

FOR ALL THESE REASONS, when the truth about the finances came into the press I said that we should not be swerved from our course. I urged Michael Josselson to stay at his post, but he allowed himself to be persuaded not to do so by Jayaprakash Narayan and by Ignazio Silone; I recall that Asoka Mehta took the same position as Jayaprakash. Accordingly, Josselson submitted his resignation on 13 May 1970.

At the meeting at which Josselson submitted his resignation in writing, there was a discussion about a change of name. I argued that we should retain the old name. I think that the new name—the International Association for Cultural Freedom—was proposed by Louis Fischer; it did nothing to deny the continuity with the Congress, and it was a very feeble gesture. I wanted the name of the organisation to be left unchanged because I wanted a firm face to be shown to the inquisitorial journalists. I wanted to stress our intellectual independence and our conviction of the rightness of what we had been doing and contending for. I lost on both issues.

In the course of the next year, I was more successful in my insistence that we refuse to haul down our flag. This had to do with the editorship of ENCOUNTER. The reports of the Congress's financial connections affected ENCOUNTER which had, in its first decade, been supported from the Paris office of the Congress but which since 1964 had been supported by the International Publishing Corporation, more specifically through Cecil King, and Hugh (later Lord) Cudlipp. Stephen Spender, who had been co-editor of ENCOUNTER from the very beginning, and who had not got on well with Melvin Lasky, any more than he had with Irving Kristol, resigned; so did Frank Kermode, who was also a co-editor—and there was a campaign to remove Lasky from the editorship. Sir William Hayter and Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. wanted Lasky to be removed on the grounds of what they implied was his "duplicity" in misleading the innocent Spender; they also thought that he was not "a sound man". They took Spender's side in the quarrel. Another ENCOUNTER trustee, Andrew Shonfield of Chatham House, said he wanted Lasky to be replaced, not because he disapproved of him but because he thought that a decade as editor was long enough and that a new editor from the American side was desirable. (He proposed Saul Bellow; that would have been the end of the magazine!) In the end, I won, mainly because Cecil King, who was then making up the budgetary deficit of

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ENCOUNTER, and Hugh Cudlipp, his second in command at the International Press Corporation, both came down on my side of the argument.

It was interesting to me to see how readily three distinguished intellectuals were immediately dissuaded by one emphatic statement by the wealthy patron of ENCOUNTER, although he did no more than agree with what I had been saying unsuccessfully over and over to them. I quote what I wrote not many years after these events:

> "At a turning point in the battle for his continuation as editor, Cecil King and Hugh Cudlipp invited the Board of Trustees to lunch in the private dining-room at the top of the hideously modern building of the International Press Corporation in Holborn, near Chancery and Fetter Lanes. Two of the trustees, perhaps drawing their information from accounts of Stephen Spender, spoke very disapprovingly of Melvin Lasky 'as a human being'.
>
> After some time, I intervened. I told the trustees and patrons that if I had a daughter who, as daughters seldom do nowadays, came to me and told me that she wished to marry a man named Melvin Lasky, I might have some hesitation about assuring her that she was on the right path. But, I said, we are not considering a prospective son-in-law, we are considering an editor of a great intellectual monthly, and for that we already had a very remarkable man, a great editor, and we could not in a month of Sundays find another nearly as good. At this point, Cecil King, sitting at the head of the table, intervened with the characteristic force of a man of wealth and affairs. He said, 'Great editors are scarcer than hen's teeth. Lasky is a great editor and we ought to keep him.' This carried the day."

(A concluding section of Edward Shils's article, featuring a personal portrait of Michael Josselson, will be published in the next issue of ENCOUNTER.*)*

Shadows

Shadows at the door, through the door.
No one comes in. The television screen
Flickers news from Panama, ads for tampons.

Slurping of noodles, sucking of plenitude.
We eat alone, polite and separate:
Three Japanese, one foreigner. And then

The screen reveals a slaughtered chimpanzee
Which (if I understand the bulletin)
In Kyoto managed to pick up a key,

Unlocked his cage, and rampaged through the lab,
So had to be shot. We see his body, flat
Down in some other monkey's cage; we all

Look up from eels or noodles to take stock
Of something not like news, so singular
We look at one another in surprise

And murmur common nothings, and shake heads
In shared amazement that such things should be
Here in our little world of food and drink.

It doesn't last long. Apes are animals,
And we are human, though we're different,
Polite, and separate, beyond the shadows.

Anthony Thwaite

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ART

Jacques-Louis David

A Romantic Realist

By Denys Sutton

CRITICS FACE a dilemma when writing about the important exhibitions that are a feature of the art scene in the United States as in Europe. Should they rely on their impressions of the contents? Or should they subjugate these to detailed study of the immense catalogues that are almost invariably provided? Very often the ideological opinions—Marxist, feminist, and half-baked pseudo-psychological—expressed in such publications will make the critic wish to dispute tendentious views rather than comment on the works.

Frequently, too, more information is offered in catalogues than is actually required. Reviewing the Royal Academy's Frans Hals exhibition in *The Times Literary Supplement* of 24 February 1990, the painter Timothy Hyman observed:

> "If scholarly cuisine served up the elegant entrée of the connoisseur, our nouvelle version presents its documentation more or less raw, as though the reader were expected to cook it all at table: 15,000 words of 'technical examination' will be read only by restorers and specialists."

Even if commentators should manage to munch their way through such indigestible text, they are presented with yet another problem. Are they supposed to discourse on the life, on the period ("in context" is a favoured phrase), or on the artist?

All these matters were raised by the two-part exhibition held at the Louvre and at Versailles from 26 October 1989 to 12 February 1990, and devoted to Jacques-Louis David. Here the difference that can exist between exhibition and catalogue was made strikingly clear. For, paradoxically, although the David catalogue—over 650 pages long—contains much that is of relevance from biographical and historical points of view,[1] little indication of his life and contacts appeared in the show itself.

David (1748-1825) is an artist who arouses constant interest because of his connections with men such as Robespierre—as is only to be expected, he makes an appearance in Simon Schama's *Citizens: A Chronicle of the French Revolution* (1989). But David's work is also a reminder of the changes that have occurred in cultural life since his time. The Christian subjects drawn upon by the Old Masters—the Annunciation, the Adoration of the Magi, and the Crucifixion—can still be readily understood. Identification of the classical and mythological themes employed by David is quite another matter. Since few now study the Classics, the implications of the stories of Antiochus and Stratonice, of Belisarius demanding alms, and of Brutus receiving the bodies of his sons are usually missed. But that these compositions had considerable meaning for the artist's contemporaries is attested by press comments of the time, although unfortunately they are rarely cited in the catalogue.

Art historians are keen on controversies; and the precise identification of several of David's celebrated neo-classical pictures certainly presents difficulties, as Antoine Schnapper makes clear in his contributions to the catalogue of which he is co-author. Commendably, however, he does not mind admitting his own past mistakes; and of course he happily points out the errors of others. But then problems concerning David's art are numerous. For example, a number of paintings attributed to him at the time of an earlier Paris exhibition, in 1948, are no longer accepted as authentic. Indeed, a valuable exhibition could be devoted to the master's numerous pupils and followers, as was done last year on a small scale at Colnaghi's and Wildenstein's galleries in New York.

DAVID HAD an innate dramatic sense, derived from his love of the stage; significantly, the tragedian François Joseph Talma (a favourite of Napoleon and later of Louis XVIII) was one of his friends. Such works as *Les Licteurs rapportant à Brutus les corps de son fils* of 1789 and the enigmatic *Le Serment des Horaces* of 1784 (both in the Louvre) present essentially theatrical images, and in the case of *La Douleur d'Andromaque* (Ecole des Beaux Arts), which was exhibited in the Salon of 1783, grief is forcibly and dramatically conveyed. Yet it is David's skill in discovering the correct blend of colours and forms—seductive enveloping outlines are characteristic of his style—that makes the spectator aware of the dominant emotion in a picture; and this experience can excite us in a way akin to the impact of a scene in a play by Racine (who is now enjoying a revival in England).

One of the surprises of David's development is the way in which a master who began as a rather indifferent painter, emulating a Boucher or a Van Loo, and who then produced religious paintings in the manner of the Italian or Spanish Baroque (Ribera), became an accomplished portraitist. His

[1] *Jacques-Louis David, 1748-1825.* By ANTOINE SCHNAPPER and ARLETTE SÉRULLAZ. Editions des Musées Nationaux, £76.00. The vignette at the head of this article is a study of one of the plague victims in *St Roch intercède avec la Vierge pour la guérison des pestiférés* (1780, Ecole nationale supérieure des Beaux Arts).

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painting of a young Polish grandee, Count Stanislas Potocki (1781, National Museum, Warsaw), seems to be based on a drawing made in Rome, where the picture was started, although it was completed in Paris. If this painting is compared with his dramatic *St Roch intercède avec la Vierge pour la guérison des pestiférés* (Marseilles), one can already see the dichotomy between David the realist and David the romantic. The expressive heads of these sufferers from the plague anticipate those found in the historical paintings of David's pupil, Antoine-Jean Gros, and in those of Géricault—which may be related stylistically to several of David's rapidly sketched drawings.

DAVID SPENT the period from 1775-79 studying in Italy, having been awarded the much-coveted Prix de Rome by the Académie Française; and that city was to open his eyes, like those of so many other artists, to the charms of the antique. He appreciated and sketched such traditional scenes as the River Tiber and the Castle of Sant' Angelo—not that he ever produced drawings comparable to the red chalk studies by Hubert Robert, but the technique of his four pencil drawings of Italian scenes (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm) shown in the exhibition recalls those made by Fragonard.

Rome also encouraged David's desire to succeed as a painter of historical events, and his 1776 drawing of *Les Combats de Diomède*—a most important document in his stylistic evolution and in the realisation of his aims—suggests that chariots held a particular appeal for him, as they did for the Scots painter and art-dealer Gavin Hamilton, who was in Rome at the same period. This drawing (which is now in the Albertina, Vienna) also implies that David was aware of Rubens's art, which he would have known both in the original and from prints.

FROM DAVID'S passionate support of the French Revolution, one might assume that he was an underdog. On the contrary, he came from a prosperous middle-class family. His father had been killed in a duel when David was only nine years old, but the young painter was assisted in his early years by friends and relations. He later found understanding patrons such as Louis XVI's brother, the Comte d'Artois (later Charles X), who commissioned from him the elegant *Les Amours de Paris et Hélène* (1787, Louvre)—a painting that was probably destined for the royal bedroom.

Antoine Schnapper denies the claim of the American art historian Thomas Crow that *Le Serment des Horaces*, painted in 1784 and one of David's most celebrated pictures—reflects incipient radical sentiments. But although David had little to grumble about, he became a fervent supporter of Robespierre and the Jacobins. Could he have been unaware of the lesson that would be drawn from his *Brutus*, so dedicated to the overthrow of tyranny that he was prepared to order the execution of his own sons? That classical theme was to become a recurring motif of the Revolution. After David's election to the Convention in September 1792, he played a considerable role in art politics—notably in his hostility to academic teaching—and was among the signatories of Louis XVI's death warrant. David never hesitated to bite the hand that fed him, and may be considered a characteristic example of "radical chic". From the relatively unfamiliar *Self-Portrait* of 1791 (Uffizi, Florence), in which he depicts his deformed left cheek and wry mouth, one may deduce that he nursed grievances and was of an hysterical disposition.

Fired by enthusiasm for the revolutionary cause, he even became head of the interrogation section of the French police (a sort of French *Cheka*). This was a strange role for a painter of his calibre, akin to that of a character in a novel by Balzac. Such precise information about his activity in police matters has stimulated debate over David's moral values. What is quite clear is that he was apt to strike attitudes. His art is certainly declamatory. Typically, after Robespierre's arrest on 9 Thermidor (27 July 1794), David declared that he too would drink the hemlock. He did nothing of the sort, and remained at home during this dangerous period, although that did not save him from several months of imprisonment.

It is easy to imagine David, with his wild eyes and exaggerated behaviour, declaiming passionately during the Bolshevik Revolution. The German Fr. J. L. Meyer got his measure when observing (in his *Fragmente aus Paris*. . . , 1797) that even when the artist's political activities were over, his head was still not entirely freed from chimerical political ideas. But although David may have been ruthless, his estranged wife came to his aid during his incarceration, and many of his numerous pupils admired and helped him.

DAVID'S POLITICAL ACTIVITIES, however, only tangentially concern any evaluation of him as an artist. His vivid sense for the dramatic was complemented by considerable curiosity about life, and this permitted him to create vivid and arresting images such as his famous *Marat assassiné* of 1793. The painting (now in the Musée des Beaux Arts, Brussels) was carried to the Louvre through the streets of Paris, and amid much public acclaim was placed in the first Salon of the Republic. It is a most astonishing canvas, its dramatic effect heightened by the contrast between the empty space of the background and the still life formed by a wooden case—a makeshift writing-desk on which stand a quill and inkpot and a page or two of the notes which Marat had been writing at the moment of his assassination. (David had in fact visited Marat only the day before.) Of this picture, Baudelaire said: ". . . *dans l'air froid de cette chambre, sur ces murs froids, autour de cette froide et funèbre baignoire, une âme voltige.*"

Throughout his career, David was keen on highlighting, as it were, the details of still life in his compositions—such as the shallow wicker sewing-basket in *Brutus* and the wooden case in *Marat*. He was thereby harking back to the tradition of the 17th-century *peintres de la réalité*. Similar details may be found in his portrait of Dr Alphonse Leroy at Montpellier (exhibited in the Salon of 1783), and in the early masterpiece of the great chemist Antoine-Laurent Lavoisier and his wife (1788, Metropolitan Museum of Art). This intimate picture symbolises the scientific spirit of the Enlightenment: its

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refined colours and the delicately painted passages representing the scientific instruments are exquisite. David did well out of that commission: his fee, 7,000 francs, was higher than the price he received for large-scale historical paintings.

DAVID WAS A remarkable portrait painter. The early paintings of members of his immediate circle—his aunt, Mme Buron (1769, Chicago), and his uncle, the architect Jacques-François Desmaisons (1782, Buffalo)—show that he could capture the painterly properties of costume and render character, gifts which are also admirably reflected in the portraits of his parents-in-law, Charles-René Pécoul and his wife (1784, Louvre). Good-natured, well-off bourgeois, they bestowed on their daughter a sizable dowry.

Although he continued working during the Revolution, several of David's portraits remained unfinished—such as that of Louise Trudaine (Louvre): the poor woman's father, husband and brother-in-law were sent to the guillotine. A chameleon-like quality marks David's character. He rang the changes on his style in such a way as to reflect new moods, as may be noted in the portraits painted after his release from prison in 1795. The days of the Terror seem far away in the highly attractive portraits of his sister-in-law Emilie Sériziat and her husband Pierre (Louvre), both of which were shown in the Salon of that year. He conveys an air of serenity in the portrait of his Dutch admirer, Jacobus Blauw (It is now in the National Gallery in London; contrary to the opinion expressed in the catalogue, it is in excellent condition.) And he catches the humour of the sitter in his portrait of another Dutchman, Gaspar Meyer (Louvre). In the 1790s both men undertook difficult negotiations with the Directoire in Paris on behalf of the Batavian Republic.

David also had a wonderful eye for women. His splendidly uncluttered portrait of the 23-year-old Madame Récamier (1800, Louvre) continues to exert a fascination that was acknowledged by Théophile Gautier, among others. He had, too, the knack of suggesting feminine sensuality, as in the robust portrait of Henriette de Verninac (1799, Louvre).

A MAJOR MASTER of propaganda, David placed his use of heroic scale at the service of ideology—to the extent that he may be hailed as the forerunner of much Communist and Fascist art. His celebrated picture of Bonaparte crossing the Alps at Saint Bernard displays this side of his work. Antoine Schnapper proves on the basis of newly-discovered documents that the first version of this composition (now at Malmaison) was commissioned by Charles IV of Spain through the Spanish Ambassador in Paris, and was painted in 1800.

David's relations with Napoleon,[2] who appointed him *Premier Peintre*, are fascinating for the information they provide about Imperial patronage. Like many a Left-winger, David was keen on money, and he engaged in considerable arguments with the Imperial household over the remuneration for his four great commemorative pictures. Vivant-Denon, Napoleon's director-general of French museums, and the first administrator to organise the collections in the Louvre, always argued that any expenses should be properly accounted for.

The master's eye for character is nowhere better displayed than in the haunting sketch of the young General Bonaparte (Louvre), which probably dates from 1797. And of special interest is the portrait of the Emperor in his study, which was painted in 1812 for Alexander Douglas, later tenth Duke of Hamilton, and is now in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. David wrote to Douglas that he had depicted Napoleon at a most characteristic time. The Emperor has been working on the *Code Napoléon* into the early hours of the morning; the long-case clock shows that 4 a.m. has struck, and at this time Napoleon would have been preparing to review his troops.

DAVID LIVED COMFORTABLY in exile in Brussels where, proscribed as a regicide by the government of Louis XVIII, he took refuge in 1816 after the fall of Napoleon. The portraits from this period are apt to be neglected, but their distinction is evident in two unfamiliar works: the portraits of the Prince de Gavre (from a private collection) and of Zénaide and Charlotte Bonaparte (J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu). Charlotte was David's pupil during the period when she and her sister, with their mother, Queen Julie, also resided in Brussels; ex-King Joseph spent most of his time on his estate in New Jersey.

Changes in David's neo-classical compositions were inaugurated during this period by his *Sapho, Phaon et l'Amour* (Hermitage, Leningrad), which he painted in 1808 for Prince Nicholas Youssoupoff, a Russian diplomat and collector, and owner of Arkangelski, the great country residence on the outskirts of Moscow. This stylised picture possesses an elegant polish that accords well with the sophisticated taste of a cosmopolitan aesthete.

A similar note is struck in several paintings from the Brussels years—*L'Amour et Psyché* at Cleveland (not on view), *Télémaque et Eucharis* (1818, J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu), *La Colère d'Achille* (1819, Kimbell Art Museum, Fort Worth), and *Mars désarmé par Vénus et les Graces* (1824, Musées royaux des Beaux Arts, Brussels). These highly coloured compositions, with their slightly cloying character, echo the sensibility of the 18th century and—a symptom of the relief experienced after the Napoleonic wars—possess affinities with the sentimentality associated with the English periodical *Keepsake* and the waltzes of the Congress of Vienna.

Mars désarmé par Vénus is an astonishing picture on account of the way (and I make no suggestion of any direct influence) it prefigures the sort of nude that became popular in France—the women painted by Ingres, Baudry, Cabanel, and others. David's rich colours in these paintings add point to his remark in a letter to Gros of 13 September 1817. If he had had the good luck to visit Belgium earlier, he wrote, he believed he would have become a colourist.

The few drawings in the exhibition that date from David's time in Belgium (all are admirably catalogued by Arlette Sérullaz) present an unusual side of the master. Most of

[2] They are well treated in Louis Hautecour's readable volume, *Louis David* (Paris, 1954).

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these black chalk sketches do not represent classical subjects, but evoke an enigmatic and mysterious world, not without a connection with the fantasies of Fuseli. Indeed, the head of a man with a turban (from Besançon) gives the impression that it is of the inmate of some asylum or a figure perceived in a dream. One group of mysterious figures (Fine Arts Museum, San Franscisco) has the haunting quality associated with the works of the English parricide Richard Dadd. It is in keeping with David's temperament that, even in the calmer years of his maturity, dreams seem to have tormented him.

Many documents relating to David have been published in recent years, notably by Daniel and Guy Wildenstein in their *Documents Complémentaires au Catalogue de l'Oeuvre de Louis David* (1973). These emphasise the extent of his ambitions, which led him to embark on large-scale works such as the *Oath in the Tennis Court*, the *Sabines*, and those tributes to the Empire that are among his most substantial achievements. That he was a careful planner is attested to by the many preliminary drawings that exist for *Léonidas aux Termopyles* (1815, Louvre), which Napoleon went to see in the artist's Paris studio in April 1815, after his escape from Elba. This picture harks back to the early period of Poussin, thereby giving further evidence of David's growing interest in colour.

A master of crowd scenes, David would have enjoyed directing a film. His versatility was revealed, too, in the way in which he became a convincing painter of the history of his times. Yet it is typical of his skill that while *Le Couronnement de l'Empereur et l'Impératrice* (Louvre) gives the impression of realistic observation, in effect it blends truth and fiction, for Napoleon's mother, "Madame Mère", who is represented in the picture, did not in fact attend the coronation. She had remained in Rome. As is often the case with artists, David was quite happy to create what is virtually a capriccio.

THIRTY YEARS AFTER David's death in 1825, one of his pupils, Etienne Jean Delécluse, published a large and informative book on him. Both a painter and a perceptive art critic, Delécluse appreciated Géricault, Delacroix, and even Courbet; and his writings were praised by Baudelaire (who was himself an admirer of David). Delécluse's volume, which was reprinted some years ago in a new annotated edition,[3] makes excellent reading. It is a brilliant portrait of a living artist by a contemporary, although it lacks the piquancy of the Goncourt brothers' book on Gavarni, the great illustrator and caricaturist of the social contrasts in Parisian life.

Delécluse blends telling anecdotes and observations (David was cool to his children) with remarks about art and stylistic development. He believed that David primarily sought "*la poésie de forme*" through which could emerge life and thought, as opposed to the system favoured by his contemporaries, who went in for ideas rather than for form.

David was not an imaginative painter, but he had the ability to re-arrange truth so as to suggest an illusion of verisimilitude. His paintings were inspired by ideas and theories, but in the end, as is obvious enough, their success depends on forms and colours. Delacroix was by no means appreciative of David's art in general, but even he acknowledged that David was a realist and perhaps an idealist. In fact, David was far more of a romantic than is often generally conceded.

[3] Etienne-Jean Delécluse, *Louis David, son Ecole et son Temps: Souvenirs* (1855; ed. Jean-Pierre Mouilleseaux, Macula, Paris, 1983).

Diggers

Of course he was dead. Yet he spread so wide,
his digger's hands curled, I went back to see.
No mole could grow more. He was pocket-sized.
His fur was not black. It showed silver sheens
smudged open by a finger, ash and brown.
He had been earth's. He was easy with death,
he rippled, he swam. I could not put him down.

Mining my pocket, he travelled to meet
the child's hands. He flowed over her palms
with white pocked leather on his feet
his pink claws harder than my arms.
In glare of day we do not feel
them working by us, all around,
stop, or think them lovely till
they have slipped underground.

Alison Brackenbury

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OBITUARY

On James P. O'Donnell

A Foreign Correspondent

By Melvin J. Lasky

WHEN James P. O'Donnell died recently (in Boston, on 16 April, aged 73) the only long appreciations of his life and work as an American journalist in Germany were, surprisingly enough, in a London newspaper—although he had little to do with England (his ancestry was Irish) and was practically unknown there.[1] Neither the US nor the West German press had more than perfunctory notices. But he was, in his way, one of the most influential American foreign correspondents of his day, and most of his mature life was spent in Berlin. I remember his finally packing his books and papers in that lofty penthouse apartment on the Kurfürstenstrasse, more than 30 years after he had come to the ruined *Reichshauptstadt* in 1945, casting a last look through the high windows towards East and West, a glance at once affectionate and protective, a bit of the old *Kurfürst* himself. Jimmy O'Donnell had been a witness to all of the divided city's post-War history, but few nowadays remember him, or it; though it was, possibly, recorded in the chaotic archive of his papers, clippings, and letters one saw spread across the rooms he occupied in the end as a Professor of Journalism at Boston University.

The perceptive and moving obituary in the London *Independent* recognised the man as "one of America's premier foreign correspondents". I think of all those Berlin years which we shared together, greeting and briefing and dining in the Zehlendorf "Press Club" all the other premier correspondents. They came and saw and sent their earnest dispatches: the Brothers Alsop, Joe and Stu; Marquis Childs; Walter Lippmann; *et al.* They were of quite another mould.

I thought Jimmy harked back to an older generation, more romantic and adventurous—resembling, possibly, Richard Harding Davis, or Vincent Sheean, or even John Reed—with their penchant for being committed to high-minded causes (which, surely, no objective newspaperman should do).

Like some character in a Henry James novel, he was an American who was almost too involved in Europe. He had liberated a German *Blockhaus* in the South of France, converted it into a villa overlooking the Cannes bay; and covered from there the turbulent port of Marseilles, centre of the French Communist Party's Stalinist attempt to come to power. When he wrote critically about the early disorganisation of NATO, with the Italian contribution to the chain-of-command being "made out of spaghetti", he was challenged by an outraged Italian Senator to a duel on any Roman hill of his choosing: and we barely held him back from rushing out to a fateful dawn encounter.

When he was disgusted with weak, hesitant Western policies in Central Europe in the first critical days of the building of the Berlin Wall (as an adviser to General Clay he had pleaded for the US tanks at Checkpoint Charlie to knock it down), he decided to stay on to do, Yankee-style, his "bit for freedom". His work to liberate Eastern political refugees—some literally "underground", crawling through subterranean passages of escape—earned him the opprobrium of the Ulbricht régime which, in the only tolerable pun ever coined in the local cold war, referred to him as "Jimmy O'Tunnel". He was a dedicated figure in the "Scarlet Pimpernel" network that devoted years in the 1960s to the various projects of digging under the barricaded Brandenburg Gate. He coined the phrase in those years, which was his standard reply to the critical and the curious, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*". Reconciled to General Clay who turned up again in Berlin as the military representative of President Kennedy (and hired O'Donnell as his personal adviser), O'Donnell suggested the phrase to his old Harvard classmate. O'Donnell shared JFK's broad Bostonian twang and pronounced German with an uncannily similar Yankee accent. The phrase "*Ick bihn ahyn Bahleena*" was the high point in that famous speech in 1961 before the crowd in front of the *Schoneberger Rathaus*, with Dr Adenauer and Willy Brandt at the President's side.

WHEN HE WAS assigned to do an interview with Chaplin, or write a book about Hitler, or to talk with the newly-released prisoner of Spandau, Albert Speer, he lost himself for years tracking down the most absurd connections and relations, and came up with a body of journalistic work that was unique.[2]

I remember his grotesque account to me of pressing "the Devil's Architect" about the *Kupferhalle*, the great copper dome which was to be the centre-piece of all the grandiose buildings for which Hitler ordered Speer to make blueprints (and which he was never able to build). The Copper Dome would have been seven times as large as St Peter's Basilica

[1] Keith Botsford, in *The Independent* (18 April). It was followed by remarks of my own (24 April), and then the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* (27 April) published a translation of my obituary, and the estimable *Rheinischer Merkur* (edited by Thomas Kielinger in Bonn) printed an article by Alex Jung (27 April).

[2] See, in ENCOUNTER, James P. O'Donnell, "Conversations with Speer" (October 1976); "Charlie Chaplin, Adolf Hitler & Napoleon" (June 1978); and in the *New York Times Magazine*, "The Devil's Architect" (26 October 1969).

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in Rome; and here Hitler intended to hold indoor rallies before 150,000 standing enthusiasts. O'Donnell pressed Speer about the new problems that this architectural megalomania raised, such as "indoor cloud dispersal".

"Could you have allowed 'indoor clouds' to have disrupted a speech by the *Führer*?"

Speer, released from Spandau and living in Heidelberg, showed him some sketches of the project, and plunged himself with a certain familiar thoroughness into such matters of body moisture—for wouldn't the exhalations from such a massed audience of listeners, indoors, have slowly risen (as warm air always does)? O'Donnell left Speer musing:

> "On a wintry day, up there underneath the cold copper of the cupola, this rising mass of warmed air would have met a layer of chilled air. This in turn would have led to small cloud formations and ultimately to precipitation. . . ."

This was a new aspect of the science of rhetoric, a subject which only Speer (and his *Führer*) had stumbled upon: the meteorology of oratory. He told O'Donnell that the *Kupferhalle* was supposed to be complete in 1950, well-tempered and cloud-free.

I share with Jimmy O'Donnell's friends the hope that a selection of his clippings and manuscripts, with attached bric-à-brac, buried in the shambles of his Boston flat on the Charles River, will some day be collected; for the best of him was not ephemeral.

THE "GERMAN CONNECTION" began before the War, in 1939, when he had won a Harvard scholarship to study abroad and spent a semester in Jena and the summer in Weimar, reading his Goethe and Schiller. (But Eire-ophile Yeatsian as he was, he wrote there an admirable small book, entitled *Sailing to Byzantium*.) In Bayreuth he had been introduced to Adolf Hitler, shook hands, and when he was asked by the *Führer* how he liked Germany he predicted, with his usual careless confidence, that "the summer weather in Saxony would be hotting up. . . ." He went on to his fascinating book on the life and death of the *Führer* in his Berlin bunker. He knew from Alistair Cooke that Charlie Chaplin was a great admirer of Napoleon, and that Charlie had scrapped, or adapted, Cooke's film script of the Great Corsican in order to make *The Great Dictator*. This led O'Donnell on to, of all things, the trail of the "Bonapartism" in Hitler's psyche. And dissenting from the usual notion that Hitler had no rapport with Napoleon (he mentioned him only once in *Mein Kampf*), he recorded a Kafkaesque skein of coincidences, culminating in the last-ditch Bunker instructions to the Nazi Generals in April '45 to hold out until the 5th of May. They could not; and the *Führer* committed suicide on 30 April. O'Donnell asked himself (and queried the Generals): "Why the 5th of May?" It happened to be the date on which Napoleon had died on St Helena.

Possibly because, between his times in Berlin, he lived in Paris in rather a grand napoleonesque *hôtel particulier*, he pressed on in his interviews with Charlie Chaplin to the Bonapartist link between Adolf and Charlie, who had, after all, accumulated an impressive souvenir collection of the great French dictator. He followed Charlie from his Swiss villa all over Europe, getting scraps from him in between film festivals, and finally to London. (As O'Donnell cracked, "Chaplin and I now both crossed the Channel: we were both doing better than Napoleon. . . .") Chaplin, he concluded, had been right to do the "switcheroo": he could understand (and impersonate with his little old moustache) the *Führer* better. His jabberwocky speeches ("*Verboten . . . kaputt . . . Katzenjammer*") were more convincing than his pidgin French; and indeed the unforgettable dance with the great globe itself was being filmed at the very same time that Hitler had ordered Speer to construct for the grand room in the Chancery a similar balloon which, as Jimmy O'Donnell established, was only 20 centimetres larger.

THIS MARVELLOUS FREE ASSOCIATION of outlandish facts, twisted historical memories, and significant psychic quirks marked the genius of O'Donnell's journalism at its best. A reportage out of Hamelin, where he "St Vitus danced" the whole route of the legendary Pied Piper (after doing research in the town's medieval archives) elicited a grateful acknowledgment from C. G. Jung, who wrote a long and important letter trying to fit O'Donnell's account into the Jungian notions of myth and the collective unconscious.[3]

Even more important, for it had more than intellectual impact (indeed it may have changed history), was the day in November 1947 when his pixillated Irish talent for fantasy inspired him to do his regular piece for *Newsweek* on the subject of the coming blockade of Berlin. The actual Soviet blockade was half-a-year in the future; but O'Donnell extrapolated imaginatively from the tensions building up for Stalin in his offensive against the Western Allied positions in a half-city a hundred miles behind his Iron Curtain. O'Donnell had been in the West Berlin of the '40s a journalistic thorn in the side of General Clay who, like the other Western commanders, tried hard to maintain the fiction of Four-Power unity and harmony. Jimmy's fanciful scenario of the American retreat from Berlin, under Stalin's ultimatum, was a lurid story of panic and disarray; even *Newsweek*'s editors cut shocking paragraphs from the story. General Clay hated it. He contemplated expelling O'Donnell for "undermining Western morale". But the frightening prospect that a life-and-death blockade might really take place, and that the Allies would have to retreat as best they could over the *Autobahn* going west to Helmstedt, had its educational effect. It "opened eyes" and "stiffened resolve"; and General Clay later confirmed to me that O'Donnell's 1947 piece, uncannily entitled "DATELINE Germany, 1948: THE BIG RETREAT", had given him sleepless, nightmarish nights. His wakeful days Clay devoted to devising the air-lift which in 1949 finally circumvented and defeated Stalin's blockade.

Those of us who were his old friends (and could break

[3] A letter of September 1956 to M. J. Lasky, reprinted in *C. G. Jung: Letters* (ed. Adler & Jaffé, tr. R. F. C. Hull), vol. 2, pp. 330-332.

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through his torrential loquacity) drank innumerable toasts in Boston's Union Oyster Bar, and before that in his favourite Karl'chen's *Kneipe* on the North Sea island of Sylt, to the eerie clairvoyance which I ascribed to Edgar Allan Poe hallucination and he, modestly, to Koestlerian coincidence.

I have often wondered where the commitment to freedom-loving Berlin came from. Irish-Americans usually have a different priority on their political militance. And O'Donnell, born in Baltimore, started his intellectual life under the influence of the celebrated H. L. Mencken, that cynical, iconoclastic, and indeed Germanophobe "sage of Baltimore". I suspect that O'Donnell's libertarian engagement had more to do with his own family and with the skeletons in that closet.

Keith Botsford (in his *Independent* obituary) mentions a "half-brother" who was a reporter on the *New York Daily News*. John O'Donnell was more than that; he was the extreme spirit in Washington journalism of that notorious "America-First isolationism" which campaigned against President Roosevelt's efforts to help the Allies against Hitler. He was an "anti-anti-Nazi". At one White House press conference in the early 1940s, FDR lost his patience (or pretended to) with the O'Donnell hard line of questioning. In a scene of memorable melodrama the President took from his Oval Room desk-drawer a curio of a beribboned medal and awarded it to Brother John—it was the German Iron Cross. Brother James felt ashamed, humiliated. I always surmised that it was out of certain deep feelings of compensation that Jimmy, a crusading US Army captain, almost became a war hero a dozen times on the Western front, and went on for the rest of his life battling for victory in the various struggles for Berlin.

Before he left Berlin for New England (and an academic post to teach a new generation of students "how to listen to the world news") he wrote a farewell piece which was published in 1979 in *Reader's Digest* (and reprinted in a dozen editions). He said that in a decade's time the hateful Berlin Wall would crumble. People would be dancing on its ruins. Fragments of the rubble would be sold for souvenirs. . . .

Ten years to the day the East German Communist régime collapsed: there were joyous scenes on the *Mauer*; and little chunks of concrete were being peddled. I spoke with him in his Boston hospital room and promised him that I would be sending him a piece of memorial rock, for he had proved himself to be a prophet in somebody else's country; but he died before I could dispatch the padded package.

AUTHORS

Ettie Aman, who lives in Jerusalem, was formerly co-editor of the *Zoutpansberg Review* in the Northern Transvaal, and on the staff of the American Joint Distribution Committee in Paris, Prague, Bratislava and Casablanca. She was also Executive Secretary of the United Israel Appeal. She has published a number of short stories; one, about the Six Day War, has been broadcast by the BBC.

Chris Zithulele Mann is currently working on an extended video of oral poems. He writes from Natal: "These poems are written in a prosody derived from my study and practice of African oral verse and a layman's knowledge of quantum mechanics . . . . I tried to imagine each line and stanza as having the potential to generate a pattern of energy."

John Holloway is a Fellow of Queen's College, Cambridge. His volumes of poetry include *Wood and Windfall* (1965), *New Poems* (1970), and *Planet of Winds* (1977).

Geoffrey Wheatcroft writes weekly for the *Sunday Telegraph*, and is opera critic of the *Evening Standard*. His two most recent contributions to ENCOUNTER are "Three Devout Journalists" (March 1990), and a portrait of T. E. Utley, "A Tory Seer" (April 1990).

Nigel Clive, a former member of the Diplomatic service, is the author of *Greek Experience, 1943-48* (1985), which tells of his work with the Greek Resistance Movement during World War II.

D. J. Enright, Co-Editor of ENCOUNTER 1970-72, has published many works of poetry, fiction and criticism. His *Collected Poems* were published by Oxford University Press in 1981 (n.e. 1987). To celebrate his 70th birthday in March this year, Oxford University Press brought out a volume of *Selected Poems*, together with a collection of essays written in his honour, *Life by Other Means: Essays on D. J. Enright*, edited by Jacqueline Simms.

Herbert Lomas, who has been a lecturer at the universities of Helsinki and London, is a regular critic for *London Magazine*, and has published seven books of poetry, the most recent being *Letters in the Dark* (Oxford University Press, 1986). *Contemporary Finnish Poetry*, his translation and introduction of twenty-one post-War Finnish poets, will be published by Bloodaxe in December.

Donald Thomas is Professor of English at the University of Wales Institute of Science and Technology in Cardiff. He won the Eric Gregory Award for his first book of poems, *Points of Contact*. 'ericHe has published biographies of *Swinburne: The Poet in his World* and *Robert Browning: A Life Within Life* (Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979, 1982), and his novels include *The Ripper's Apprentice* and *Jekyll, Alias Hyde* (Macmillan 1986, 1988).

Edward Shils is Professor on the Committee on Social Thought at the University of Chicago, and Honorary Fellow of Peterhouse, Cambridge. He founded and edits *Minerva*, and was a founding member of the editorial board of the *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists*. The University of Chicago Press has published four volumes of his collected works: *Intellectuals and the Powers and Other Essays*; *Centre and Periphery*; *The Calling of Sociology and other essays on the Pursuit of Learning*; and *The Order of Learning*.

Denys Sutton, editor of *Apollo* magazine 1962-87, organised the Bonnard and 18th-century French art exhibitions at the Royal Academy, and various other major art exhibitions in Tokyo, the United States, and London. Formerly art critic of *Country Life* and the *Financial Times*, his many books include works on Bonnard (1957), Derain (1959), Toulouse-Lautrec (1962), Whistler (1966), Rodin (1966), Walter Sickert (1976), and Degas (1986).

Malcolm Rutherford is Assistant Editor of the *Financial Times*.

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THEATRE

Madness & Trivia

By Malcolm Rutherford

A GLANCE at the London theatre list this summer suggests that there has been a return to the classics: not the English classics, but the continental European. How far this has been a conscious collective decision is anybody's guess; no one seems to be sure. But it has certainly been a popular one. I discussed Peter Hall's sensitive production of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* in the July-August issue. Since then we have had Brecht's *Mother Courage*, Pirandello's *Henry IV*, and another relatively obscure but sparkling Corneille: *The Illusion*. All, incidentally, were at commercial theatres.

Henry IV is the eye-opener, not least because nowadays it is rarely performed, but also because of the splendours of this production at the Wyndham's Theatre and, above all, because of the way Richard Harris, an Irishman, plays the main part. This must be one of the best individual performances on the London stage for some time. Harris has a way of moving his arms that can make speech seem superfluous. To that, and the Irishness within his voice, I shall return. First, however, some words about Pirandello.

It is customary to associate Pirandello with madness, and it is true that madness figures strongly in this play. Yet it is madness as a theatrical device rather than a psychological state. It is not easy to say who is madder: the man who pretends and sometimes believes he is Henry IV (Henry IV of 11th-century Germany, that is), or the people who go along with the pretence. In the end, it is Henry who shatters the illusion by announcing that he has returned to sanity; the others do not like it. But since his last act in the play is to commit murder, perhaps he is mad after all. Who can say for certain?

Henry IV's madness has much in common with that of Hamlet: sometimes feigned, possibly sometimes real, and often invented by those who fear him. Besides, who is to define what madness is or the precise degree of the affliction? As Hamlet says: "I am but mad north-north-west: when the wind is southerly I know a hawk from a handsaw." Pirandello openly acknowledges the debt to Shakespeare. The final scenes of Henry IV are littered with direct quotations from Hamlet.

Biographically, Pirandello's acquaintance with madness was through his wife. There is no evidence that I have come across that he was mad himself, though he was certainly a very strange man. His life is worth looking up. The biography that I consulted was *Pirandello* by Gaspare Giudice, published in Italy in 1963 and in English by Oxford University Press in 1975. It is a model of its kind, covering both Pirandello's voluminous writings and his life, as well as the somewhat febrile climate of the time.

Pirandello was born in Sicily in 1867 of a family that was doing quite well out of sulphur mining until the business went bust. He read widely and wrote copiously almost from the start, but more, it appears, for want of anything better to do than for pleasure. He went to university in Rome, then Bonn—which he liked. Shortly after he returned to Italy as "a man of letters", there was an arranged marriage. The dowry was based on money from sulphur, and again the mines failed. Pirandello then spent 25 years of his life as a teacher, largely dependent on a teacher's income. He was often obliged to pass his time marking exam-papers when he would have preferred to be writing.

The arranged marriage was rather less odd than it sounds today—it was, after all, southern Italy in the 19th century. There is no evidence that Pirandello objected to the idea in principle, and although relations with his wife were strained from an early stage, the marriage produced three children, to whom he was devoted. He was not a philanderer. Whenever his wife wished to leave, Pirandello implored her to stay. She was eventually committed to an asylum in 1919, and she stayed there for 40 years until she died in 1959, long after the death of her husband.

PRESUMABLY such marital traumas had an effect on the mental balance of the man, but they are not the most remarkable part of the story. Prolific though his literary output was, he scarcely wrote a full-length play until he was 50. He preferred short stories and novels and professed to look down on the theatre. Yet between 1916 and 1924 he delivered 28 plays, some of them written within a week or two, while continuing to produce his short stories and other writings. Pirandello's most successful play was *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, written in 1921. He wrote *Henry IV*, which rivalled it, almost immediately afterwards. Probably he never produced anything as good again. In some peculiar symmetry, he wrote 21 plays before those two masterpieces and another 21 afterwards.

The spurt of dramatic output was not the least of the oddities. Pirandello was no ordinary card-carrying Fascist, someone who might join the Party under an authoritarian régime for the sake of a quieter life or career advancement. He was an ostentatious Fascist. He joined the movement, and publicly announced that he was doing so, shortly after the murder of Giacomo Matteotti, the socialist deputy, in 1924. Thus, at a time when there was considerable anti-Fascist reaction, Pirandello gave a personal vote of confidence to Mussolini. "Your Excellency", he wrote, "I feel that this is the most propitious moment for me to declare a loyalty which I have hitherto observed in silence. If Your Excel-

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lency finds me worthy to join the *Partito Nazionale Fascista* I will consider it the greatest honour to become one of your humblest and most obedient followers. With utter devotion." The application was accepted. (Incidentally, I find it strange that none of this is included in the programme-notes for the Wyndham's production; theatre-goers might at least regard it as interesting.)

The Fascist government subsequently put up funds to establish the Arts Theatre in Rome where Pirandello found a new vocation as a director. He seems to have had no particular style, except to insist than an actor must believe utterly in the part that he was playing: the theatre was for actors. For a time he was a great success because he imposed discipline on the Italian stage. But he came to prefer touring abroad. There is a story that when he took his company to Berlin he was faced with a VIP welcoming committee at his hotel on Unter den Linden. Pirandello assumed that it must be for someone much more important than him, so he entered the Hotel Adlon by the servants' door. He agreed to come out again and enter through the main entrance when told of his mistake.

PIRANDELLO was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1934. He had a brief flirtation with the cinema and went to Hollywood where the film of one of his plays, *As You Desire Me*, became famous on account of the stars: they were Greta Garbo and Erich von Stroheim. There were several attempts, both in Germany and America, to make film versions of *Six Characters in Search of an Author*, and a few at *Henry IV*, but none of them came off in his lifetime. Pirandello died in Rome in 1936.

What relevance, if any, that extraordinary life has to the brilliance of *Henry IV* is impossible to demonstrate. I cannot see anything in the play that is remotely fascist, or even overtly political. Nor is there any direct connection between the fact that the main character is, or pretends to be, mad as a result of a fall from his horse, and the fact that Pirandello's wife was eventually certified as insane. What one can see is a man steeped in the theatre—in the acting as well as the writing, the theory as well as the practice. *Henry IV* is the work of somebody who has studied and understood his Shakespeare, his Molière and Corneille, his Ibsen and Chekhov, and learned from the best of all of them.

The Irishness of Richard Harris helps. It adds the fey dimension to the madness. In a gesticulation repeated several times with variations, Harris simply moves an arm—as a prima ballerina might in *Swan Lake*—to indicate disdain, indifference or triumph—at any rate, a distancing of himself from the rest. The production is almost worth seeing for that alone. Pirandello would have loved it.

Mother Courage at the Mermaid ought to be similar, but is not. I had always thought of myself as a Brecht supporter, as well as an admirer of Glenda Jackson, the actress. After all, it should make no more difference that Brecht was a Communist than that Pirandello was a Fascist or Shakespeare a High Anglican Tory. It is the plays that count. Not in this production. Mother Courage as played by Ms Jackson is utterly, totally relentless. As she pushes her wretched cart round and round the Mermaid stage, there are a couple of lines that stand out with undeliberate irony: "All I want", she says, "is to get through all this." Certainly that is how I felt as a member of the audience. Then again: "You can't live on the road for ever; it's demoralising." Evidently this actress can, and even prefers it that way.

This is a monstrous injustice to Brecht. The point about Mother Courage, the character, is that she must once have been a very attractive women, and sometimes still is. She has several children by different fathers, but not because she is a whore or anything like it. It is because she is the sort of woman that men like, and who likes men. She ought to be able to flirt, make jokes, show a leg, show that she can occasionally rise above the endless trudging. What is needed in a part like that is a touch of the Archie Rice in John Osborne's *The Entertainer*: a bit of vulgarity and an ability to take yourself off. Perhaps also a touch of Pirandello, where you recognise in the end that it is only a play. Glenda Jackson will have none of such trivia, and therefore belittles Mother Courage.

It would be a great pity if this production signals the decline of Brecht on some spuriously rationalised grounds that now the Berlin Wall has come down, the Cold War has ended and Communism is dead, he is no longer relevant. Brecht deserves better than this, though I should add in fairness that many other people have highly praised the production and the performance. Deference takes a long time dying.

The really clever theatrical illusion was actually called *The Illusion*. It is the second minor Corneille play to be performed at the Old Vic in the last few months, the first being *The Liar*. The text is of little consequence. It is a play about a play, with plenty of theatrical in-jokes. In one of the last scenes, large busts of the world's great playwrights, including Corneille, appear on stage. And one of the pleasures is the way Corneille is translated into rhyming English couplets by Ranjit Bolt: "From Ethiopia to Japan around/I was the quintessential ladies' man", and "Your least attractive feature is your wit./ Your mouth's quite nice until you open it." Trivia, but fun. Pirandello would have enjoyed that, too. He had almost certainly read the original.

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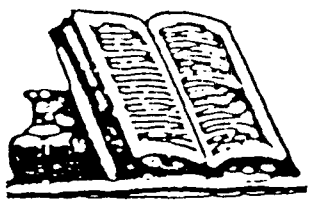
IN THE MARGIN

Of Laws & Lampreys

By Anthony Hartley



IT WAS, I BELIEVE, Auberon Waugh who invented the phrase "the Nanny State". In the years of "the young fogies" it was bound to be a success; it had about it just the right blend of snobbery and impertinence. All of us who are in the know or had wealthy parents are aware that the word "nanny" ("child's name for a nurse", *OED*) implies a tiresome fussiness that takes the form of insistence on our keeping ourselves polite, clean and tidy. So it is not surprising that those whose imagination finds its atavistic roots in the nursery take pleasure in applying this metaphor to the protective legislation of the state. For what are usually described as "the upper class" do not want protection. Rules and regulations—especially those affecting the minor pleasures of life such as drinking and smoking—are not for them. No wonder they recognise, in laws designed to protect them from themselves, the irritating leading-reins of infancy!

But a cliché, redolent of superior anarchism, hardly settles the matter, effectively snide though it may be. There is a potentially interesting debate on the uses of state power which cannot be avoided by taking it for granted that everything that emanates from Westminster or Whitehall is slightly ridiculous.

"Nanny", of course, was not the only one to impose restraints upon the English young. Similiar obloquy attached to the word "schoolmaster", often used as synonymous with "pedant". There too is (or was) a profession whose task it was to inculcate into the young many things that appeared boring: multiplication tables, Latin or French verbs, spelling and the parsing of English sentences. If only they still did! As Mr Dooley remarked, quoting his friend, Father Kelly: "I don't care what ye larn thim so long as 'tis onpleasant to thim." But he, like all of us since, was soon to encounter the progressive teachers of his day (the 1890s): "'School shud be made pleasant f'r th' childher,' she says. 'Th' child who's hair is bein' pulled is larnin' patience,' she says, 'an' th' child that's pullin' th' hair is discovrin' th' footility iv human indeavor,' says she."

We all know where that sort of thing was to lead. An extraordinary and tragic instance of these follies was analysed by Geoffrey Partington in a recent article ("The Legacy of a 'Racist Murder'", ENCOUNTER, June 1990). At Burnage High School, Manchester, children had progressed to burning down the buildings and the use of flick-knives. Libertarian theory, the cult of self-expression, the denigration of authority and the alibis provided by "anti-racist" ideology produced their own theatre of the absurd, a "Marat-Sade" enacted in the classroom. Thus schoolmasters and mistresses—now metamorphosed into the non-authoritarian, non-sexist "teacher"—have changed their image from pedagogue to ideologue, concerned not so much to instruct or discipline children as to preside over their characteristic disorder. In many American and British schools today it is no longer possible to attack authority, since it no longer exists.

The relevance of this to attacks on "Nanny State" should be obvious. The writers who display such irritation about minor restraints imposed by law are, most of them, on the Right wing of politics, and have also made their protests about the cultural consequences of disorder in the schools. Yet the principle of curbing certain types of behaviour in society at large is the same as that which requires stricter discipline and more attention to lessons for school-children. The idea that one cannot do exactly what one likes, especially if it has disagreeable consequences for other people, is surely one that continues from nursery to classroom to adult life. In that sense "Nanny" provides an excellent preparation for later years.

OF COURSE, opinions will vary on what sort of behaviour needs to be curbed. "*Non Sputare*" the notices in Italian trains used to read in a more expectorant age, and it could be held that this represented an intolerable restriction on the freedom of those who prefer to chew tobacco rather than smoke it. Now it is the smoker who is being pursued. Medical warnings and the protests of those who dislike other people's smoke have put smoking on a par with spitting as an anti-social habit. In the United States, always to the fore in democratic hypochondria, the smoker is already a hunted species, existing furtively among manual workers and students. All this is trivial and ridiculous enough. But the fact that a new Puritanism has sprung up around health and diet does not mean that everyone should be left to their own devices in matters that concern others. Were tobacco chewing to return as a frequent habit, it is hard to think that anyone, however libertarian, would favour promiscuous spitting in public places. It is also true that to smoke between the courses of a meal is an unpleasant habit which indicates a lack of taste in food and wine and a disregard for others. It is for this reason that smoking is banned during a meal in the dining-rooms of many London clubs. Since this rule is approved by members, it is the result of an expression of opinion and has nothing oppressive about it. "Nanny State" has nothing to do with it.

This is a point that libertarians forget. Governments do not pass legislation for the fun of it. They produce rules and regulations because they are under pressure from public opinion to do so. Moreover, the process by which issues affecting health, welfare, safety and the environment are now brought to the attention of politicians has changed rad-

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ically—a fact which, in itself, would make the phrase "Nanny State" a superficial description of the reality lying behind the proliferation of protective legislation. This considerable political innovation is worth some attention.

THE HABITUAL cycle begins when some expert or other—be he doctor, social worker, or ecologist—wishes to draw attention to something which, he believes, constitutes a danger to life or health. Alert to the fact that only publicity through the media will help him and his colleagues to achieve this, their first step is to produce a Report. This will arrive nicely printed and impressively full of statistics on the desks of MPs, Ministers, civil servants and editors. The latter will pass it on to a reporter or correspondent, asking for an article to be written for next day's paper (this, after all, is "news"). There will be very little time to obtain opinions from other experts on the subject, still less to check the argument and the conclusions drawn from the statistical evidence. As for the statistics themselves which, in such cases, so frequently turn out to contain gross errors of fact and interpretation, they cannot be checked at all. Even the fact that they are often a mere extrapolation of conditions that are hardly likely to remain constant or continuous is usually missed.

So the conclusion of the article or of the editorial, if it gets as far as that, is that SOMETHING MUST BE DONE. For, as the expert has told us, HUMAN LIFE IS AT RISK. On television the writers of the Report will appear with furrowed brows and a serious expression—to wear a white coat adds greatly to the effect—to inform us that the "something" which must be done is to provide them with large sums of money for "further research" (blessed phrase: it suits experts and politicians alike!) or pass legislation affecting the conduct of business or the behaviour of individuals. There will also be sombre personal warnings. In the present state of the law the speaker cannot actually prevent his audience from being offered, say, lampreys. But if we ignore him, then we will have only ourselves to blame. . . . There is, after all, a royal precedent for succumbing to lampreys.

Meanwhile MPs, having received the Report and studied it as little as the journalists, are preparing to ask questions in the House. WHEN IS THE GOVERNMENT GOING TO ACT? DOES THE MINISTER NOT KNOW THAT A DISTINGUISHED GROUP OF SCIENTISTS HAS RECOMMENDED . . . ? Ministers and civil servants who have the means of taking other advice, and are conscious of the costs of preventive action, will do their best to procrastinate by referring the matter to an appropriate advisory committee or an official scientific adviser. But they do so at their peril. For if one old age pensioner should perish from a surfeit of lampreys, then this death will be laid at the door of government, and the opposition will be happy to accuse the occupants of the front bench of being little better than murderers. Did they not know how foully polluted the breeding areas of lampreys have become? The Atlantic sewerage outfall. . . .

After a little of this kind of thing, it is hardly surprising if Ministers give in and promise legislation or regulation and more research into the feeding habits of the lamprey. Meanwhile, civic-minded men and women all over the country will have been forming anti-lamprey pressure groups which, merged into an umbrella organisation, will campaign under the acronym BAL (Bann All Lampreys). Others, more extreme, and concerned with the rights of fish, will adopt the device LLL (Let the Lamprey Live), and, rather than depict human beings writhing in agony as a result of their passion for the delicacy, will concentrate on the pangs of the lamprey itself, rudely torn from its peaceful habitat of stone and sand to be devoured by human, but also (since it is an expensive fish) capitalist, greed.[1] Happily, both groups can be induced to unite for demos, picketings of fish restaurants, petitionings and lobbyings of Parliament—all the outward and visible signs of an aroused public opinion. And so another lobby is born whose pressure, albeit on a rather narrow front, can be enough to change government policy. If they succeed, then no more surfeits, but no more lampreys either, which is bad news for those who enjoy eating them.

The perils of food did not always attract such attention. At the end of the '50s when I was working in Manchester for the then *Manchester Guardian*, one of the most frequent news items during the summer—items that never penetrated to the southern editions—was the news that a group of old age pensioners or school-children had been laid low by pork pies consumed on an "outing". Fifteen or twenty might be gravely ill, two or three might even die, yet no one thought anything of it. It seemed an act of fate, inseparable from the enjoyment of a delicacy dear to Lancastrian hearts. Though pork pies might cut a swathe through the north of England, there was never any suggestion of banning them nor, it seemed (given the standard of cleanliness in Manchester pubs and restaurants at the time), much effort to impose more stringent hygiene on those serving them. Perhaps this robust frame of mind has something to be said for it, though our present paranoia about "clean food" also has its contradictions, consorting oddly with the present glut of exotic restaurants.

I am not advocating a sort of gastronomic Russian roulette. When the government (or "Nanny State") tells me that blue algae are making crabs poisonous, I abstain despite a passion for crab. (Paralysis by blue algae is unpleasant, though it does have the advantage of hitting the crab-eater immediately after consumption, so that he knows if he has been poisoned or not! Much worse are those warnings about toxins that accumulate gradually over a period of years and do not allow the gourmet to know where or how he is.) But with a new Report coming out every day to tell us of the dangers of eating, drinking, breathing, riding, walking, jogging, driving, sitting in offices and working at computers, it is clearly folly to be well informed; otherwise we have a choice between worrying ourselves into the grave or sinking into a state of suspended animation like a tortoise in winter.

Stout-minded individuals can turn their backs on these

[1] The Piscine Rights lobby would have some heart-rending material to present to their supporters. The recipe for cooking lampreys most highly recommended in France begins: "Cut off the end of the tail of a living lamprey and leave it hung on a nail to bleed. . . ."

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gloomy prognostications. Governments, however, have no such alternative. Ministers cannot afford to have the victims of mischance appearing on television to complain of official negligence. The modern techniques for forming pressure groups, now widely used for all sorts of purposes, and the ready availability to them of the broadcasting media, desperate for stories and "live" interviews, mean that politicians become politically vulnerable if an accident occurs that can be connected with some warning or other, previously ignored. In these circumstances their conclusion must be "Better safe than sorry".

Thus there is a not easily resistible temptation for government, harassed by pressure groups, to intervene more and more in areas affecting health, safety and the environment. This will not necessarily be supported by sound argument, but the political imperatives will be compelling. Moreover, such intervention will not only be of a general nature, where a framework of law is provided within which individual decisions operate. Government, mindful of the need to be seen to be doing something, legislates more and more for particular cases. It is, for example, fairly absurd that dog registration should become a genuine political issue, raised by one or two instances of canine attacks on human beings—absurd until one remembers that behind it lies the Rottweiler problem: the keeping of savage dogs for purposes that are often criminal and, in any case, result in danger for neighbours and their children. Once the question is put like that, then there seems to be a case for the regulation of dogs by the state to enable their owners to be identified. Otherwise the only alternative is immediate physical reprisal against the dog itself.

Thus the apparent pernicketiness of the state, which it is so easy to satirise, is really a reflection of the fussiness of the citizen. It is we, with our worries about pure food, clean air and rivers and our maniacal, but hopeless, desire for absolute safety on road and rail, who call for more and more rules, which, it is believed, will cheat the fallibility of human nature. Vain endeavour! Even if, as the scientists promise us, our cars can be piloted on motorways by computers, human proneness to error will find a way of introducing an element of peril into the journey. In coping with the dangers of modern life, government will always be one jump behind. For its inevitable failings it must seek to compensate by a public display of frenetic energy. It cannot let well alone, since it is badgered by political opponents and the media.

IT IS A NATURAL HUMAN CHARACTERISTIC to desire perfection. Indeed, in art and literature, this aspiration is the basis of human grandeur. So when the citizen sees some ghastly accident on television, it is normal that he should wish to be assured that it will *never* happen again. In practice, of course, *never* turns out to be *hardly ever*. But the individual can scarcely be blamed for wanting more and putting pressure on governments to get it. This, of course, is where Mr Waugh and his followers go wrong. The rules and regulations, however absurd some of them may be, are due not so much to "Nanny State" as to pressure exerted by citizens. It is part of the democratic process, and the responsiveness of politicians to such calls for action, although overdone, is better than neglect of public opinion. The purpose of the state's existence is in a wide sense protection of the citizen, and it is not surprising that he should call upon it to fulfil its role.

But what of those who write the Reports, publicise them and organise pressure groups to spur government into action? What of those who become organisers of protest over a wide spectrum of subjects? Many of them are motivated by a disinterested zeal for the public welfare. Others are not uninfluenced by the prospect of publicity for themselves and their ideas or by the vanity of being right. Others again are impelled by an innate Puritanism, ideological prejudice, or a simple inability to refrain from interference in other people's affairs. The ecological movement in Britain, for instance, ranges from those who, not unreasonably, wish to enjoy clean air and water, to others whose dislike of contemporary industrial civilisation leads them to suppose that it can be abolished, and who therefore agitate for an "alternative society". To be "green" can indicate simply a justified concern for the natural environment, but may also mean a type of fanaticism nourished by millenary belief in a world made anew—like the old Spanish anarchist who thought that, when the Revolution came, no one would eat cooked food any more. None of this would have any political resonance if it did not gain support from ordinary people, who can hardly judge the accuracy of the terrifying statistics presented to them and make few distinctions about the ultimate aims of the defenders of "Planet Earth".

In view of this mechanism that feeds pressure for regulation into the political process, it is little use complaining about "Nanny State". Government is responding to new types of political issues brought on to its agenda by new techniques of political lobbying. Mr Waugh and those who think like him are, therefore, faced with a dilemma. Blaming or satirising politicians is no good. To stem the flow of laws, which are claimed to be so irritating, the public must be convinced that there is no need for them. This means being prepared to deal in facts and figures. If anyone objects to the laws against drunken driving or the random police testing introduced to counter the roadhouse effect, which, it seems, is turning Somerset into a social desert, then he must demonstrate to the voters either that their lives will not be endangered by any relaxation of vigilance or that money, time and trouble spent on identifying delinquent drivers would be more beneficially spent on something else. This would be no easy task. To achieve it Mr Waugh would have to develop a publicity machine on a similar scale to that possessed by the lobbies. A mere charge by satirists against their defences would be a forlorn hope indeed. Only massed word processors and videos can counter "the trouble boys" and leave "Nanny State" in peace. For all this is hardly the old thing's fault. Between Mr Waugh and Des Wilson she has a hard time!

All the same, it would be better and less confusing to give up the joke altogether. It has, I suspect, lived its life.

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LETTERS

"By Friday"

I WOULD LIKE to add to *M*'s column (ENCOUNTER, March), and make so bold as to propose another translation for

> "All books must be returned to the Library by Friday"

which is

> "*Tous les livres devront avoir été rapportés à la Bibliothèque le vendredi.*"

It is shorter and perhaps (although I say it that should not) more elegant.

JEAN LARRIVE

Paris

M WRITES: *Merci! Mais cela fait toujours plusieurs caractères contre les deux lettres de* "by".

Marx, Trash, & Jews

BY NO MEANS, either in his original ENCOUNTER article ("Race and the Socialists", November 1976) or in the books he mentions ("Letters", May 1990) does George Watson sustain his charge that Marx and Engels advocated "racial extermination" and "genocide on Socialist grounds". He attempts to do this by arbitrarily putting together Engels's notorious remarks of 1849 about the Southern Slavs, Gaels, Bretons and Basques, Marx's *ad hominem* racial speculations in a letter to Engels about Lassalle, and Hermann Rauschnigg's claim that Hitler's National Socialism was based on his (Hitler's) reading of Marx.

In quoting Engels, Watson appears to have used a translation from *The Russian Menace to Europe* by Blackstock & Hoselitz which conveniently over-interprets Engels's German in two places. It translates *Völkerabfälle* as "ethnic trash" when something more like "redundant remains of peoples" is meant; and it uses the phrase "revolutionary holocaust" when Engels wrote "revolutionary world storm (*revolutionäre Weltsturm*)". More important, Watson implies that Engels's words about the extinction of certain minority peoples were not wild, ultra-revolutionary prophecies but a prescriptive programme of genocide.

Marx's tone when speaking of Jews, like Lassalle, in his correspondence has been well analysed by, among others, Werner Blumenberg in his *Karl Marx* (English trans. 1972). In his introduction to this biography, Gareth Stedman Jones writes that "Marx's alleged anti-Semitism cannot be understood except in the context of his hatred of all forms of national and ethnic particularism . . . ." A little of this understanding would have saved George Watson and his readers from his conclusion that Marx and Engels were proto-Nazis and that Hitler was some kind of Marxist.

The ultra-conservative, ex-associate of Hitler, Hermann Rauschnigg, working his passage to the United States, had his own good reasons for wanting to smear Marxism with Nazism and—as he understood it—vice versa. What are George Watson's reasons for seeking to repeat this exercise?

NICHOLAS JACOBS

London

FRIEDRICH ENGELS'S 1849 article on genocide in Marx's journal is highly vituperative, so it may be over-generous of Mr Jacobs to tone it down or to doubt that *Abfall* means trash. Engels calls the disappearance of hated reactionary races after world revolution "progress (*Fortschritt*)", which sounds prescriptive as well as prophetic; and he and Marx repeatedly insisted that socialist revolution must be violent.

As for Hitler, I have never suggested he was at any time a Marxist, as Mussolini was—merely that his claim to have based the whole of National Socialism on Marxism should be taken seriously. The basis is not the building. My own reasons and motives here concern historical accuracy, which I take leave to recommend to Mr Jacobs, since he has twice misspelt the name of one of my sources, Hermann Rauschning.

My views at large are set out in a recent book called *The Idea of Liberalism* (Macmillan, 1985). Rauschning, as Mr Jacobs rightly points out, was a Conservative, which suggests that you do not have to be a Liberal to see a point, though it helps.

GEORGE WATSON

St John's College
Cambridge

In Defence of Canada

I SUSPECT that Peter Brimelow's article in your April issue ("The Maple Leaf for Ever?"), in which he gleefully and maliciously anticipates the break-up of Canada, will provoke a storm of protest from your Canadian readers. Presumably that was his purpose; it certainly cannot have been to inform.

Brimelow fancies himself the heir to Goldwin Smith, and he offers up that worthy Victorian's vision of a North American Anglo-Saxondom as if it were a revelation, instead of part of the standard fare of every university student's introductory course in Canadian history. Would that he had read something else as well. He might have discovered that the idea of Canada as a non-nation—in the ethnically pure terms that he himself seems to favour—is a commonplace: not only one of the central themes of the country's political, constitutional and cultural history, but cause for inspiration as well as despair among those challenged by the governance of a mixed people.

In a wild misapplication of Gramscian hegemony—any port in a storm—Brimelow ascribes the moderate measure of success Canada has enjoyed in meeting this challenge to a new "public class", supposedly embodied in the Liberal Party of Canada in the 1960s. Has he never heard of the Quebec Act? Or the Confederation Debates of 1865? Or Cartier and Macdonald? What, in any case, would Mr Brimelow prefer—Yugoslavia? What he actually wants is not at all clear. On one hand, a fragmentation of northern North America on the lines of South America; on the other, a union of English-speaking Canada with the USA. Presumably the latter is the key ingredient if these in combination are his recipe for economic success. Perhaps he just wishes Quebec would go away.

BRIMELOW also tells us that Canadians are really very like Americans. This will not be news to many on either side of the Atlantic. What he seems incapable of comprehending is that, at the same time, Canada is not the United States. It is true that reams of paper are annually consumed in trying to explain this apparent conundrum, and Brimelow may find this tiresome. So do I, but for most of us not being American and being like Americans does not pose insuperable intellectual or emotional difficulties. It is a fact of life. It gives rise to recurring bouts of anxiety, but on the whole we live with our neuroses.

Brimelow's real obsession is with the various institutions and practices that have grown up historically in response to ethnic and religious differences and divisions, regional diversity, and sheer geographic immensity. These are frustratingly inefficient by his lights. Canadian political leaders need to know two languages; he prefers the US, where they only need to know how to walk and chew gum at the same time. He also detects Left-wing influences. Again, he might educate himself about the origins and purposes of public utilities, crown corporations, federal-provincial transfer payments, and social services in Canada. He might

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cast an eye on Bismarck's Germany while he's at it.

Former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau is his particular *bête noire*; he calls him "a man of the Left", with a capital "L". This designation will come as a surprise to Mr Trudeau, and to critics of his Charter of Rights and Freedoms, which has more than a whiff of the 18th century about it. Brimelow's alternative to all this Francophone socialism is himself. Fortunately, the Canadian political spectrum is more complex than this. One thing the current constitutional debate has shown is that now, as in the past, there is more than one way of ordering a federal, bi-national state.

BRIMELOW says, in the end, that Canada's problems are a revealing example of a peculiar English-speaking malaise, "the conviction that the only legitimate expression of its identity lies in subordinating itself to others . . . ." I'm damned if I know what this means, but I do think that ideological breast-beating is a far greater obstacle to getting on with the job of political and ethnic accommodation that is required here and elsewhere. Canada has survived and gained the reputation for dull, grey decency that is its chief claim to fame in the world community precisely by avoiding the kind of final solutions Peter Brimelow yearns for.

KENNETH C. DEWAR
Mount Saint Vincent University
Halifax
Nova Scotia

Is Canada Breaking Up?

PETER BRIMELOW asks the question on the cover (April 1990), and repeats it in a somewhat less dramatic form once inside the number ("The Maple Leaf For Ever?"). He obviously did not take my undergraduate course, Sociology 368 on Ethnic and Minority Group Relations. Early in the course, I read out a dozen alarmist statements and invite the class to guess the authors. I receive many offers suggesting politicians in the news, writers, journalists, columnists, philosophers of the thinking-aloud kind—all contemporaries. Actually, the statements are 100 and 150 years old.

In fact, Canada has stood a lot of constitutional excitement in its history and, hopefully, will stand some more. It is the ahistoricism of the two North American societies and the limited erudition of their writers that feed many of the current concerns. Yet, famous last words: maybe, this time it is "for real" and the country will fall apart. Many would think humanity will be the poorer.

Brimelow shows his true colours when he writes about the "debilitating cost of the French connection to English Canadian public life". It doesn't occur to him that the French fact is a dimension of richness lacking in other societies—and that "the French of Quebec will never assimilate". Brimelow reminds one of Lord Durham 160 years ago, who could not imagine any worthwhile future except becoming English and, out of the goodness of his heart (no rabid imperialist, he!), offered this fate to the French Quebecers. The only thing Brimelow does not do is to cry in defence of the threatened English language. There are fringe groups in this society who believe that English is threatened.

The one point on which the author is right is "rent-seeking", the use of political power to extract benefits from the economic process. "Multi-culturalism" is one of the instances of rent-seeking, which degenerated into the stimulation and purchase of professional ethnic leaders. But why pick on Canadians? Don't politicians bribe electors in all democratic countries?

KAROL J. KROTKI
University of Alberta
Edmonton

O Canada. . .

AS A naturalised citizen, who has adopted Canada as home and who is also bilingual, I think Peter Brimelow's article ("The Maple Leaf For Ever?", April 1990) is full of clichés and exaggerations and cannot go unchallenged. Mr Brimelow says that Canada "could be a second Switzerland". In fact, Canada is a Switzerland of the New World. Not only does Canada enjoy one of the highest standards of living in the world, comparable to that of the United States, it is also free from some of the unpleasant aspects of American life.

The United States, in spite of its great wealth, remains a highly skewed society with extremes of wealth and Third World poverty. Brimelow talks about an American underclass; a euphemism that hides the growing army of homeless and marginals in the society. It is the only industrial democracy that has no health care; and infant mortality in some American cities approaches that of some least developed countries of the world. Our nearest neighbour, with its lax gun laws and rampant crime and violence, looks more like a distant and malignant planet.

There is no substance in Mr Brimelow's assertion that Canada's standard of living is "as low as 70% of the American level". Latest figures show the US per capita income as $20,920 while Canada's is $20,195. With far less skewed incomes, Canada's general standard of living is actually higher than that of the United States. It is not Canada but the United States, with its falling productivity, growing poverty and illiteracy, which is in danger of decaying into Third World status in many areas.

MR BRIMELOW talks about the Quebec issue but he totally ignores the crux of the problem. To understand Quebec's linguistic and cultural apprehensions, one will have to visit Wales. Today, not only are 3 million Welsh a small minority *vis-à-vis* 46 million English, but hardly a quarter of the Welsh population, mostly in rural areas, speak any Welsh. The Welsh nationalists not only look back with nostalgia for the days when the majority of Wales spoke Welsh, but pine for lost political power which has disappeared with it.

Similarly, 6 million francophones in Quebec are not only a minority *vis-à-vis* 20 million English speakers in the rest of Canada but they live next door to 240 million English-speaking Americans whose linguistic and cultural influence permeates the entire Canadian society. Without some conscious and

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deliberate measures Quebec might face the fate of Wales: its French-speaking population might become a rural minority without any political clout. No self-respecting people can passively accept such a fate.

IT IS NOT in Canada's own interest that French Quebec becomes assimilated in the dominant language and culture of North America. The presence of French language and culture remains a major bastion against Canada's assimilation in the so-called American "melting pot". The Americans invade Canada daily through their soap operas, their Hollywood, their Broadway, their *Newsweek*, their *Playboy*, their Jimmy Swaggert and so forth. It is a veritable cultural blitz against which Canada has very little defence. French language and culture are among the few cultural assets Canadians possess that would be unwise to be allowed to wither away.

Contrary to Mr Brimelow's assertions, Canada has been as successful as Switzerland in its peaceful evolution as a modern democracy and, like Switzerland, it would continue to prosper as a bilingual society.

MAHMOOD ELAHI

Ottawa

Brimelow's Riposte

READERS WILL remember that in my gleeful and malicious way I argued that Canada has evolved an unusually powerful "New Class", complete with a self-serving "dominant ideology" that "basically amount[s] to the opposite of everything I have asserted". I am naturally delighted to have flushed out three such fine specimens, all not coincidentally university men, to confirm my point.

The characteristic responses to the news of impending death are supposedly rage and denial. Both are exemplified here with a vehemence that goes some way to explaining why obvious realities, such as the fact that Canada is not remotely a "bilingual society" but instead contains an emerging French-speaking nation state in the shape of Quebec, are rarely acknowledged in the country's public discourse. Typical of this crabbed discourse, my critics are apparently quite unable to respond to my specific comments on the functioning of the Canadian state, for example the radical social engineering consequences of Ottawa's bilingualism policy in a country where very few are bilingual, or the absence of the anti-majoritarian checks and balances represented in the US federal system by an effective Senate.

As I write, Ottawa's most recent effort to square the constitutional circle, the Meech Lake Accord, has collapsed amid enough international attention that I feel I need hardly belabour my central thesis—that something is rotten in Canadian Confederation. Two further points will suffice.

Firstly, Canada's economic shortfall relative to the US is not my "assertion" but a long-established phenomenon noted (as I said) by impeccable Canadian nationalist sources like the Gordon Report as far back as 1957. Current OECD Purchasing Power Parity figures show Canadian per capita output trailing the US by about 6.5%. (Canadian personal income, of course, is further reduced by higher tax rates.) We may debate whether the underclass is a cause or a consequence on the American policy scene, but the fact remains that the US is still economically superior.

Secondly, Professor Dewar is unable to recognise the peculiar malaise whereby English-speaking communities are supposed to find expression only by subordinating themselves to others. He need look no further—albeit at some risk to his soul—than the penultimate paragraph of Mr Elahi's letter.

PETER BRIMELOW

New York

Christianity & Communism

IN TRYING TO imagine Russia after Communism's heyday, both Hugh Trevor-Roper and George Urban ("Aftermaths of Empire: The Lessons of Upheaval & Destabilisation", ENCOUNTER, December 1989) rely on conventional Christian history as a parallel.

The trouble is that this history is at odds with the existing record, weakening any conclusions based upon it.

The Christianity that emerged in post-Republican Rome was eventually based on 27 books of the *New Testament* written not in Judea but in military or other centres of Rome. The Church inched its way to prominence through a Roman administration whose character is reflected in Christian organisation. Christianity emerges as a Roman instrument appointed to combat Jewish insurgency, and so played a role somewhat similar to that of Birobidjan in Russia, or Napoleon's Sanhedrin. The decline of Jewish insurgency after Bar Kokhba meant Rome no longer needed the Church, which it then actually tried to dismantle, though without success, given Rome's imperial dependence on Christian armies for the defence of its eastern border (as Julian's ill-fated campaign, for one, so convincingly demonstrates).

The point is that Christianity did not start out as a religion but rather as a pragmatic political option linked with the deification of the Caesars, which was also a political matter.

If yesterday's politics tends to become today's religion, Christianity does, after all, offer a fruitful analogy. The prospect of a "sacralised" Communism or Bolshevism—something, in any case, on the cards for some time—could give the Russians the ideological stamina which the Habsburgs or the Ottomans lacked.

NIEL HIRSCHSON

Johannesburg
South Africa

Smetana & "Creative Staging"

IT IS rather distressing to take issue with Mr Curt Riess ("The Catastrophe of Modern Theatre", ENCOUNTER, April 1990) on one of the aspects of his enlightening article.

Unfortunately, as far as Smetana and his *Bartered Bride* are concerned, Mr Riess is doubly wrong. First: there is, obviously, no such thing as an "original Czechoslovak text", just as there are no "Belgian", "Yugoslav", or "Canadian" texts, since there are no such languages.

But there is, of course a Czech libretto of Smetana's most famous work—the original one, written by Karel Sabina, and not by Max Kalbeck, as Mr Riess seems to believe. Kalbeck provided the first—and by no means last—German version of the singing lines for the Vienna production in 1893, 27 years after the première, 22 years after the Petersburg production of the definitive, three-act version, and 9 years after Smetana's death. Kalbeck's German version has often been criticised. Clemens Krauss asked for a new translation as soon as 1940; Walter Felsenstein provided another one for his production at the Berlin *Komische Oper* in 1950; and the list is by no means final.

Otherwise, Mr Riess's article is a deeply sensible one. Ask anybody who had to witness Claude Régy's vicious assault on Wagner's *Meistersinger*, or Peter Sellars' free exercises on Mozart and Handel (brilliant, indeed, but also short-sighted and short-breathed)—both visible this season in Paris—what he or she thinks about "creative" staging.

PIOTR KAMINSKI

Paris

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Life & Letters Today

Peking

PING-PONG: **The Communist Party's ideological watchdogs have been preaching revolutionary zeal in a language not heard since Mao died in 1976.**

The Party has been doing its best to bring the arts to heel. There was, for instance, the Peking production of Puccini's *Turandot* last month. In the optimistic atmosphere of 1988, the Central Opera had planned to use Tiananmen Square to stage a gala version of the story of the Tatar prince who risks death and torture for Turandot, the daughter of a senile Chinese emperor.

After the June massacre, the Party decided it was too provocative to have the Emperor's three ministers, Ping, Pong, and Pang, singing into the square:

> **"They strangle you in this place, impale you, cut your throat, skin you, tear you to pieces and decapitate you, saw you and disembowel you."**

After the Party censors did their work, the curtain went up on an expurgated *Turandot* less than half its length and devoid of any touchy scenes such as those in which the masses call for the blood of their rulers with lines like:

> **"We are already digging a grave for you."**

THE TIMES

London

PETER CARTER-RUCK *is the hottest libel lawyer in the land [Martyn Harris writes]. When the dreaded shadow of Carter-Ruck falls upon certain newspaper offices, editors and lawyers flap, and writers spend weary hours, spoiling fine articles with get-out clauses and weasel words.*

But Carter-Ruck would probably be unknown to the general public if not for his relationship with the magazine **Private Eye**. *He has frequently sued the magazine, to which the* **Eye** *retaliates by taking terrible liberties with the spelling of his last name.*

When a jury awarded £600,000 damages against **Private Eye** *in the Sonia Sutcliffe case, Carter-Ruck appeared on four TV programmes to attack the level of the settlement, and was subsequently invited to a* **Private Eye** *lunch. He attended, with some trepidation, but found the occasion "rather anodyne". Shortly after he asked if, in the new spirit of friendship, the magazine would now stop printing his final initial as an* **F**, *to which they responded by printing his second initial as an* **F** *as well.*

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Moscow

OPENING THE BIG HOUSE: **Inside Moscow's grim Lubyanka prison, more than 150 small cells have held thousands of Soviet citizens since the building became the headquarters of the KGB, the Soviet secret police, after the 1917 Bolshevik Revolution. But now the winds of *glasnost* have reached as far as Lubyanka's chill corridors. Indeed, the KGB has created a public relations department, and its director, Gen. Alexander Karbayinov, plans to open parts of the building to guided tours. Said Karbayinov: "The KGB exists to serve society and not the other way around." Even state repression can look good with a public relations spin.**

MACLEAN'S

London

ON THE SCENT: *We are told by scientists preparing an exhibition of European smells that the definitive aroma of Britain is newly-mown grass.*

Perhaps so. But what is the smell of London?

Once, it might have been a synthesis of boiled cabbage, wet dogs and cheap hair oil. Now it is diesel fumes and doner kebab. Is this progress?

LONDON EVENING STANDARD

INNER MEANING: **The pitfalls of pretentious re-christening are indeed endless.**

Ron Peck tells that in Malta last month he lunched at a bar memorably called Dick's Takeaway.

"The owner was regaling us with how he intended going upmarket, even to the extent of putting his name in Latin.

"When asked what the translation would be he replied: '*Coitus interruptus*.' I quickly withdrew."

SUNDAY TIMES

New York City

MALCOLM-X-RAY?: *Black activists want to restore the decrepit Audubon Ballroom in upper Manhattan where Malcolm X, the civil rights leader, was shot and killed, apparently by members of a rival faction, 25 years ago.*

Columbia University wants to tear the building down and build a Medical Research Center which would provide jobs and health care in the largely black neighbourhood.

Both sides are studying how the two goals can be reconciled.

NEW YORK TIMES

New York City

REVOLTING STUDENTS: **A jury of thirteen experts who dug up the bones of five gold prospectors at Deadman's Gulch, Colorado, to solve a 115-year-old mystery of murder and cannibalism has agreed with the original verdict.**

Alfred Packer, who led the prospectors into the Rocky Mountains, was "guilty as sin". Packer, a Union Army veteran who has become a figure in Colorado folk history, was convicted of murdering his colleagues when they became stranded during the bitter winter of 1874.

However, whatever his crimes, killing and cannibalising his companions, Packer will remain a hero to many. Students at the University of Colorado have named their dining room after him.

DAILY TELEGRAPH

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—George Steiner

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